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Aaron Bielejewski

Holding down the Fort

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For Ellie

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1 Introduction

Policing is one of those defining concepts of modernity about which much has written—to the point where it is difficult to imagine that there is much left to be said—that is, at the same time, decisively modern. The modern conceptualization of police referring to a fixed and commonly identifiable role, occupation and organization, rather than simply a practice performed by the state through its various arms and agents, is not yet 200 years old. Egon Bittner wrote that, “the most remarkable fact about the timing of the foundation of the modern police is that it is sequentially the last of the basic building blocks in the structure of modern executive government.” (1970: 15) The taken-for-granted structures of modern society and democratic governments not only count among them the various structures and practices of policing but to a large degree are held together and reinforced through them. Far from the simple practice of formal social control of public security, the police have become engraved as a symbol of society—for better or worse.

The police today, and in most places, are just as much a “Rorschach in uniform” (Niederhoffer 1967: 1) as they were in the US in the 1960 s. Public attitudes and opinions often seem to be divided between hostility to the continued existence of police and universal support for every action of every officer. The growing field of police studies often seems to be similarly divided into positivistic and technocratic attempts to improve the efficiency of the “war on crime” and those who look at the past seventy years of police reforms, theoretical and technological developments, failures, and varying relationship to their communities and the very concept of ‘democratic government’ and seem ready to throw their hands up and declare the entire project a failure. Part of the reason for this is that the taken-for-granted nature of the concept of policing is rarely challenged: even to criticize the police in a specific case or mediatized scandal could interpreted as a call for improving training, hiring practices, internal disciplinary practices, or

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supervision, as a direct and personal criticism of police administration or political leadership, as a critique of specific practices or the use of specialized units which display less concern for civil or human rights or the concerns of the citizenry, as an attack on the very nature and structure of the police as a state institution, or as a more symbolic, expressive, exasperated rhetorical utterance. Despite myriad conflicts and disparities between them, the various dimensions of the policing concept are often treated singularly: the individual uniformed officer, often even out of uniform, is treated as a part of the whole organization, indistinguishable from that organization, and at the same time as a representative of the entire broader cultural idea and *institution* of policing. The work done by police is likewise considered 'police work' whether discussing the work they are theoretically considered to be doing within the strict confines of the bureaucracy (in this case, the production of measurable outcomes primarily in terms of crime and arrests), the practicalities of encounters and actions taken in pursuit of institutional demands (patrolling the streets, responding to calls, talking to individuals and declaring them suspects, making arrests), the work they inevitably find themselves doing that doesn't easily lend itself to bureaucratic measurement (advising residents, giving warnings, solving minor disputes, 'checking up' on people and places) and the entire realm of action that takes place from the moment a shift begins until it ends. If policing refers to an institutional organization—in which the actions taken by the agents of that organization only roughly correspond to the bureaucratic guidelines, hierarchies, mission statements, and statistics presented to the public and outside agencies—and police work refers to the actions taken by an member of that organization, then how should we view police work situated within a social space, municipality, community, or society?

This work is an ethnographic analysis of a police organization presumed to challenge many of the orthodoxies of police behavior, identity, and relationship to the local community. The Revierpolizei is a community-oriented policing unit which—in the most generous reading of history—predate the contemporary fixation with the rhetoric (if not practice) of community-oriented policing. Though similar units (with different nomenclature) exist throughout Germany, the Revierpolizei within the state of Brandenburg are particularly relevant for working in regions highly defined by low population densities and a rapidly decreasing population (due in part to poor economic opportunities locally.) The Revierpolizei are in a region—and in a country—where crime has not effectively become a "moral panic" or a bellwether issue in politics, at least not to the extent it has in most English-speaking countries. The problems facing the region—the pseudonymous country of "Falkenmark"—are not the sort that could easily be claimed to be 'police-able,' but rather tend to contribute to a generally bleak view of the

future and in many cases a growing tribalism and us vs. them mentality, not unlike that which is currently upending local and national politics in much of North America and Europe. Yet the lack of explicit police problem presents the challenge of how police can even frame their work and present themselves when appeals to “crime fighting” or public security are lacking in rhetorical power or cannot be shorn of more complex political implications. Based on observations of the officers of the Revierpolizei, the following work examines not just their works but also their words, determining how it is that the varying individual and communal understandings of “police” and “community” are reflected in decision-making, police-citizen encounters, rhetorical practices, storytelling, and police culture generally. The work of the police was found to a great extent to simply be maintaining a social space in which the police could work, rather than to fulfill specifically identified bureaucratic goals: the police did not simply communicate with community members, but they did so in ways (spaces, times, manners) that, ideally, *created and maintained* the idea of a shared community.

2 Our Town: The Sociology of Policing Communities

2.1 The Village Sheriff

Marshal Will Kane of Hadleyville, in the New Mexico Territory, has recently married and is looking forward to retirement and leaving his frontier town behind to open a store and raise a family. When word comes that the outlaw Frank Miller is returning to town and seeking vengeance against Kane, the marshal decides to remain on duty for one more day to prevent Miller and his gang from overrunning the town before the replacement marshal can arrive. Even as the judge who sentenced Miller to prison, the bitter deputy who was passed over for the job as marshal, and Will's predecessor either refuse to help or prepare to flee the town, the marshal remains adamant. Abandoned by the majority of the townspeople, Marshal Kane writes out his last will and testament, puts his wife on a stagecoach set to leave town, and waits for the arrival of Miller's train at high noon. The townspeople lock themselves inside their houses, essentially transforming the town into an arena for the expected showdown. Standing alone in a broad dusty street in a seemingly abandoned frontier town, the marshal confronts the outlaw and the two members of his gang. Even outnumbered—but with the help of his wife, who turned back at the last second—the marshal prevails, killing the three. The ghost town reverts to a visible community as the townspeople leave their shelters and cluster gratefully around the marshal and his wife. Marshal Kane removes his badge of office and throws it to the dusty ground. He and his wife board a wagon leaving the town for good, leaving behind the confused townsfolk and ending the film on a somber note.

The 1952 film High Noon (directed by Fred Zinnemann) has been considered among the pinnacle of the Western genre, which in turn has been considered one

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of the most iconic—and is one of the most critically discussed and analyzed—genres of American media. The threadbare narrative of a lawman risking his own life to defend an often unappreciative society from the proverbial men in black hats has become so common that after the 1960 s its use was primarily relegated to parody or reference. (Cawelti 1975) The image of the 'Wild West sheriff' has become a cultural icon rivalling other dominant tropes such as hard-boiled detectives and underdog athletes (even though a majority of films relying on this narrative feature protagonists who are not specifically lawmen.) (Budd 1976)

A German police officer in Falkenmark, in the state of Brandenburg, Polizeihauptmeister Thorsten Meyer, describes himself as the "Sheriff im Dorf"; literally, the "sheriff in the village." As a member of the *Revierpolizei* his primarily responsibility is to maintain contact with his local community within his 'beat,' implied here with the use of "Revier," which in a policing context generally refers to the jurisdiction assigned to an officer on patrol. Although patrol officers from the *Schutzpolizei*, based out of the headquarters in the county seat, occasionally pass through his territory and will respond to calls for service there, in most cases Officer Meyer is the only on-duty officer within his district, consisting of a central small town and the surrounding thirty-odd villages—many with under 50 residents—with a total population of around 4,000 residents. Officer Meyer, unlike Marshal Kane, has never drawn his gun on duty, but he does mention that there are always a few people in his district who he might need to "keep an eye on," those who are *polizeibekannt*, literally "known to the police." But apart from this Officer Meyer discusses his role as a police officer as being someone who everyone can come to when there is a problem, maintaining open hours in his office within the township and, more importantly, being available at all hours via his cell phone number—available online but also prominently posted in municipal offices. As Officer Meyer describes his job and his experiences to me, it seems to be the polar opposite of the scenario presented in *High Noon*: Officer Meyer not only needs to but claims to be able to rely on the help of the public in determining where assistance and support might be needed, in making determinations about how to resolve problems, and apart from the mention of a few 'problem-individuals,' (most of whom he seems to have known for decades and he emphasizes his hope that they have effectively 'turned their lives around,') his narrative is one of little conflict.

At the same time, Officer Meyer's account hits many of the same beats. He discusses police work using the same metaphors popularized by Hollywood (or in the classic Westerns written by German author Karl May), and apart from the different anecdotes available to him, the way he talks about his work would make sense in and could just as easily apply to police departments around the world.

Westerns “affirm the view that true justice depends on the individual rather than the law by showing the helplessness of the machinery of the law when confronted with evil and lawless men.” (Cawelti 1976: 35) Rather than emphasizing evil or lawlessness, Officer Meyer talks about how the community—his community—is made up of individuals who might need reminding or encouragement to stay out of trouble from time to time; his job is to be part of that community, not disrupt it, and his goal is to keep the peace rather than to punish people “where it might just make things worse.” In setting apart his work and emphasizing how he works within and alongside the community, he presents a clichéd and typical image of traditional policing, where officers show up at the scene of an *incident*, only aware of the few sentences and codes they have been sent over the radio, and attempt to resolve it as quickly and efficiently as possible before getting back in their car to resume their patrol. Officer Meyer presents himself as the sheriff, evoking the solitary and somewhat independent figure of the Wild West narrative, who, if he can’t rely on his community for support, can only rely on himself, but the real focus of this self-labeling is the emphasis on the sheriff *in* the village. Officer Meyer considers himself part of the community, not an outsider who can be summoned in an emergency, and his goal is not to resolve situations and move on to the next location but rather to maintain a long-term positive relation with the residents he is responsible for. In a sense, for Officer Meyer, the community *is* the sense of order and the stable relationships that he hopes to be able to maintain, and a great deal of his work is consciously intended to *not* look like typical police work; stereotypical images of police and their work imply conflict, risk and harm, (Crank 1994, Ericson and Haggerty 1997, cf. Doyle 2006) and Officer Meyer sees his work as maintaining consensus rather than managing conflict. This might be a necessary identity for someone in Officer Meyer’s position—there is comparatively little crime and rarely any kind of serious violence within his community. Police officers often identify their work, their territories, and themselves with the potential for risk and violence, hostile ‘outsider’ attitudes towards the police, and metaphors of crime as a disease that, if left unchecked, will spread. (Sacks 1972, Van Maanen 1973) However, it has often been concluded that officers overemphasize these problems, that talking about risk and danger is a more fundamental, functional, element of policing, necessary to maintaining a position for policing in society that avoids both the extremes of faceless institutional bureaucracy and embeddedness within a local community which itself defines policing. (Cullen et al. 1985, Waddington 1999, Campbell 2004, Demaree 2017, cf. Meyer and Rowan 1977) Officer Meyer suggests that a significant portion of conflicts, issues, or problems do not really need a solution, but that someone simply needs a channel to “express their frustration” or “some sympathy;” key to

this was often talking about problems not specifically in *policing* or legal terms, but rather at a more everyday or personal level.

Policing as a profession—especially in the US and UK—has become so associated in the public consciousness and within the narrative culture of policing with violence, confrontation, and crime-fighting that finding a counterexample seemed to challenge many basic assumptions of the role of police within society. (Bittner 1990, Behr 2000) The question remained of whether Officer Meyer was the exception or the rule—if the identity and role of police officers is framed in contexts outside of, or that downplay, crime and conflict, how exactly are they framed? If the connections between police work and crime-fighting are less related to the actual experiences of individual officers and more to the establishment of an interstitial cultural identity that can more effectively manage the various and conflicting institutional pressures, what does it mean to find a police organization—or even a valued sub-unit- where crime *cannot* effectively be the focus?

The term 'village sheriff' is not an uncommon term in German for referring to rural police officers, and the associations with the Wild West are almost certainly superficial and tertiary. Officer Meyer is not unique in using this term to describe his role, a role which can be found in rural and less-than-urban areas around the world where police deal with a different range of issues, situations, and encounters than those typically presented in popular culture, the media, or by scholars. (Weisheit et al. 1994, Young 1993) Yet his use of this term, and his pride in its use, corresponds to the way he views himself as being both responsible for and dependent on his community. The connection to the village is the most relevant here, as the elements and themes that define popular stories of the Wild West share a similar basis with ideas of community, *Gemeinschaft*, in rural villages and small towns. Cawelti (1976) describes the literary West as "an open society where the intricacies of complex social institutions are unknown, where people are surrounded by loyal friends, where hearty individualists can give vent to their spontaneous urges, and where justice is done directly and without ambiguous." (214) The West (as the village) is not the absence of broader society, *Gesellschaft*, but it is one in which community members essentially *are* their social roles, where stand-ins for the sociological concepts of structure and social change are less important than personal knowledge of and experience with the people who act out that structure and change in everyday life, where common sense is put forward as the explanation for understanding social action because experiences are presumed to be shared and shareable. (cf. Geertz 1975) To be a part of the village, one must share in the same experiences and understandings of those experiences. This means that even cases of deviant behavior, whether technically criminal or

not, must also be viewed within this communal tradition: while the 'rule of law' philosophy of the social institutions governing crime and punishment emphasizes individual acts primarily only in their immediate occurrence and outcome, the localized perspective of the community views social actors, individuals with stories that must be understood for those actions to make sense—some crimes may be seen as evidence that the offender is truly the victim, "it's really the family's fault," while crimes that may be conventionally less serious could be portrayed as a major violation, as confirming a developing portrait of someone as an outcast, a black sheep, as troublesome rather than troubled, as no longer worth being excused or helped. (cf. Christie 2004) How can a police officer enforce morality given the potential for such discrepancies and even drastic differences between the values of a community and the dry ink of the criminal law?

What makes Officer Meyer unique is that his role is specifically that of a community-oriented officer as well as being the most immediate and local representative of law enforcement in his local community, as well as his emphasis on the more 'social' aspects of policing. Community-oriented policing, primarily through the invocation of the "Broken Windows" model (Wilson and Kelling 1982) in the US and as an extension of earlier approaches in Germany, has, in most Western police institutions, been formally adopted as the guiding philosophy of police work, but the results to-date are inconsistent and inconclusive (with significant caveats.) A glaringly open question remains how and to what extent it has or was even intended to be implemented: through the use of specialized units or projects or as a transformation of the core ideas of police work? (Kelling and Coles 1996, Harcourt 2001, Waldeck 1999, Lindenberger 2003, Sparrow 2016) The case of the Revierpolizei in the German State of Brandenburg provides an interesting hybrid example—officers who work in a special unit but essentially perform core police duties and with primary responsibility for their jurisdiction. While the Revierpolizei model has its origins in the pre-unification German Democratic Republic, the stated values, aims and working styles of the unit closely mirror those claimed by the advocates of the community policing approaches developed in the US and the UK.

Notable here is that the Revierpolizei is, within the local communities, not generally seen as anything potentially controversial, at least not more so than policing in general—officers are quick to latch on to any visible symbols of public recognition or acceptance: Officer Meyer's office, with just a few newspaper clippings on the wall, is spartan in this sense when compared to the workspaces of many of his colleagues, with walls covered with pictures drawn by schoolchildren, sports jerseys from local teams, or posters advertising past local events. Many officers were quick to tell me that the

earlier conceptions of the Revierpolizei from before the fall of the Berlin Wall—local officers known as Abschnittsbevollmächtiger (ABV)—were abolished soon after German unification, but due to public pressure were soon re-implemented—officially, newly implemented—in the 'new German states,' only with different names: *Bürgerpolizisten* (lit. citizen police) in Saxony and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, *Regionalbereichsbeamte* in Saxony-Anhalt, and Revierpolizei or Revierpolizisten in Brandenburg, winning a popular referendum over the runner-ups of *Revierwachtsmeister* and *Bürgerkontaktbeamten.*[1] (Ohder & Schöne 2018, Info110 2011) The use of mythology and tradition within the Revierpolizei was apparent to me, and very often, as was the case with Officer Meyer, clear lines were drawn between *normal* police work and the community based work performed by the Revierpolizisten. (cf. Crank 1994)

The point here is not, however, to evaluate the Revierpolizei in Brandenburg, nor to present them as a successful model to be copied or adapted. This presentation of one specific and local incarnation of policing is intended to highlight the universalities and peculiarities of policing, the similarities and contrasts inherent to the very term *police*. Policing can in turn be interpreted as an almost global institution with common symbols and legitimacy, as formal local organizations with defined jurisdictions and (generally) defined powers and goals, and as the individuals who work within that organization and perform *policing*—as well as the organization culture they are assumed to share, and how that culture is depicted in media, popular culture, and scholarship to define how they perform their work and how they relate to society as a whole as well as to specific groups, and so on. Manning (2012) writes that "In many ways, the symbolization of governmental power is more important than the actual behavior of government

[1] Similar units or functions exist in the 'old' German states with similarly varying or sometimes misleading titles. In Hamburg they are *Bürgernähe Beamter*, citizen-focused officers—the word *Beamter* in this sense refers to a civil servant but in a policing context is closer in connotation to 'sworn officer.' In Hessen there are *Schützmänner [und Schützfrauen] vor Ort*, using slightly outdated or colloquial—and gender-specific—wording closer in meaning to the English constable and emphasizing the local nature of their work. In Bremen and Saarland they are called *Kontaktbeamten*, essentially (community) contact officers. In Northrhein-Westphalia they are *Bezirkspolizisten*, district police, and similarly in Baden-Württemberg they are *Polizeibeamte im Bezirksdienst*. Notably the official titles primarily refer to the individual officers themselves, i.e. Revierpolizist, or *RePo* for short, but among the officers in Brandenburg it was common to refer to the *Revierpolizei* as if it were its own organization or institution, but this title seems to be rarely used officially, possibly to avoid confusion with *Polizeirevier,* referring both to a policing district and to the station itself, along the lines of a police precinct.

agencies or their agents." (180) The specific case at hand is intended to examine the practices police—as organizations but particularly as individuals—use to manage, manipulate, alter, and weaken the symbolization of policing power.

2.2 Policing Worlds: The Sociology of Police and Policing

Policing is, like the world of medicine explored by Becker, Geer, Hughes and Strauss (1961), "at once a very old and very new profession." (8) The birth of modern police in the early 19th century roughly correlates with the birth of modern bureaucracy, industrialization, and social divisions, but the concept of formal social control centered around detection and punishment is likely older than recorded history. The Metropolitan Police of Robert Peel are considered the first modern police department due to their bureaucratic focus on establishing a predictable domain, that of public crime and disorder, as well as for their emphasis on consensus building: Peel intended his officers to work both as members of the community and as a visible remind of 'order,' a virtual necessity as the officers lacked most of the resources, notably firearms, which would come to identify policing. (Lyman 1964) Liang (1992) describes how police in Continental Europe, especially Prussia and later Germany, would adapt and develop:

> various basic rules of modern police: the exploitation of existing rivalries and animosities within the population; the careful calibration of punitive sanctions to the gravity of each situation; the attribution of acts of resistance to individuals rather than to collective groups whenever possible; and the inducement of collaboration by means of reward of various kinds, not the least of which was the granting of forgiveness to repentant inhabitants who were merely slow in redirecting their obedience to the new masters. (72)

Various strands of policing slowly merged in the second half of the 20th century, with contemporary German police demonstrating characteristics (and iconography) of British, American, and Continental conceptions of policing. Modern policing has become increasingly "scientific," with an emphasis on the best ways to accomplish the stated institutional goals of the profession (Sparrow 2016); sociological approaches to policing have conversely often explored what these goals are, how they are derived, and how this knowledge of both what police work *is* and what police work *should be* is created within the institution and implemented in various settings. (Manning 2005, 2013) Basic theoretical concepts within sociology such as the enforcement of social norms, deviance, and structure vs. agency can be identified within the life-worlds of policing, sometimes as

something of great interest to be explored and resolved, and sometimes as something taken for granted and assumed to be settled. Exploring how these concepts are used within the setting of policing—a case of an identifiable institutional setting, with its own perspective on human behavior, set of values, and forms of practices establishing itself with the broadest concept of 'mainstream society'—can reveal a great deal about how society, at various levels, is structured, managed, and changing.

The police have long been recognized as an ideal 'living laboratory' for the type of reflexive, interactive and critical research pioneered by the Chicago Schools and associated, among others, with Robert Park, William Thomas, and Everett Hughes. The latter in particular is (in)famous for commanding his students to go out an explore their own society as outsiders; to examine in-depth and on-site the parts of society which until then even most sociologists had assumed to be logical, rational, and completely understood. This would lead to a generation of fieldworkers examining professions of all sorts, as well as subcultures and communities, the most prominent example being William F. Whyte and *Street Corner Society.* (Whyte 1943, Andersson 2014)

Chapoulie (1987) describes how Hughes challenged existing assumptions of *professional* and menial work by emphasizing first-hand observation in the study of various types of jobs with varying levels of social status:

> From the first studies of marginal professions and lower-status occupations, Hughes concluded that these constitute a privileged field of observation, because their members are less capable than high-status professions of maintaining a facade and opposing their own value symbols ('professional ethics' or 'scientific knowledge') to those that researchers by virtue of their own social position, are inclined to adhere. Therefore, Hughes and his associates sought, through research that was the inverse of that done by students of [Talcott] Parsons and [Robert] Merton, to study professions of high standing with reference to conclusions they unearthed in studying occupations of lower standing. Then; by enlarging the range of professions and work situations they compared, they progressively elaborated a framework of questions that proved fruitful for studying the processes by which the division of labor is established and transformed, the way groups of workers try to exercise control over their own activities, and the unfolding of professional careers. (277–278)

The influence of Herbert Blumer, Anselm Strauss and later Erving Goffman—among others including Howard Becker, Jack Douglas, and Joseph Gusfield—shifted the focus away from social structure as a factor in itself to examining the nature of social interactions and how the use of categorizations and understandings of social structure both impacted and were impacted by interpersonal relations, drawing heavily on the earlier 'pragmatic' work of George Herbert

Mead, Charles Cooley and John Dewey. Social structure and structural relations are of primary relevance in how they are interpreted, given meaning, acted out, overlooked, represented through symbols and rhetoric, reinforced, challenged, and replaced or modified: how the self is related to others and to society. (Mead 1934) Symbolic interactionism emphasizes how, despite the normal or even ritual appearances of most social encounters, subtle negotiations are often taking place over how things are and should be treated; for example, whether someone caught red-handed by a police officer is 'more properly' viewed (as the officer might prefer) as a criminal suspect who should be sanctioned and viewed with suspicion and distrust or (as the individual certainly prefers) as a victim of circumstance who made a small mistake but should be forgiven, let go with a warning, or simply unconditionally let go. Interactionism, and relatedly dramaturgy as developed by Goffman in particular, emphasizes the demands and expectations, but also potentially fluid or porous nature, of social roles and how individuals become more deeply involved within interactions:

> Rather than being fitted by socialization for all occasions, interactionists argue that people often experience situations as problematic. Faced with ambiguity or with obstacles to their developing lines of conduct, people are forced to play a major part in defining situations and making sense of them. (Stokes and Hewitt 1976: 840, see also Smith 2016)

Policing—as an institutional field of social control and as a profession—was found to be theoretical conducive to a dramaturgical approach—that is, the explanation of human interactions and behavior using the metaphor of the theater and audience-oriented 'artificial' presentations. Police officers, like actors on a stage, perform a role and, unlike Weber's bureaucrats—tend to involve themselves in a range of interpersonal situations and relationships that essentially spans all of modern social life. (Manning 2003) The police, with simple words and gestures, can convey meaning that cuts through to core understandings of how society functions. Within dramaturgy, collective behavior represents social change (Gusfield 1966, Turner 1974) and the police represent both an institutionally-defined but practically complex and situational collective method for establishing (a desired form of) order and also social roles which are engaged in reacting to or attempting to guide changes within society (i.e. in terms of public behavior relating to deviance and crime and the definition and societal views of social problems.) (Manning 1996) The actions taken by police officers—both as ritualized and predictable behavior as well as more *ad hoc* adaptations to developing situations—bear social meaning in the relationship of those actions to various

audiences, those who are the target of action, those who witness it, and the broader backdrops of the community or society: while a great deal of policing and criminological literature views cooperation with the police as the 'standard' and desired reaction, and any other outcome or break from the implied normal trajectory as an aberration, how individuals react to the commands and demands of police officers reflects individual understandings—mediated through shared symbols and narratives and the communicative efforts of the police—of what the police are, can be, and should be.

Policing at its highest level has long recognized the necessity and critical nature of *image work*—the managing of symbolism and juxtapositioning of symbols to affect how meaning is communicated and interpreted—to both maintain the organization of policing itself—public support, access to resources, etc.—but also as a practice for maintaining legitimacy and authority as practical tools to conduct 'police work' and encourage cooperation or discourage resistance both individually and at the levels of community and society. This is especially true for individual officers patrolling the street with a mandate both to 'maintain order' and to 'fight crime'; it doesn't take long before "the officer recognizes a simple fact of life: there are more members of the public than there are police officers; an officer's control over the public depends upon the public's willingness to be controlled." (Meehan 1992: 41)

2.3 The Images of Policing

Peter Manning (2012) writes that:

> The police display themselves visibly, routinely and predictably while acting out their roles. The most visible of all police functions, their mundane core tasks, are realized through and by their strategies of random patrol, answering calls for service and investigating crime. These are ways of penetrating everyday life, even private spaces, and entail traffic coordination stops, tickets, fines, searches, roadblocks, moving presence and stopping and detaining people, keeping them in jail, escorting them to court, serving warrants and producing crime in the form of proactive investigations… The idea of a very visible presence arose from the concern of [Robert] Peel and the English people with secret policing, and the dramatizing of accessible visible officers was reinforced by the use of uniforms, large and elongated helmets, and by hiring large men. (181)

The image of the police has not only been consistently important to the function of the police, but, as Manning notes, has often been synonymous with it.

Policing, as an institution, has seemingly managed to envelop multiple contradictions into an internally coherent vision, to a policing social world that is both internally and externally recognizable. Policing seeks to ensure social stability and enforce order, but almost the entire history of policing is one of reform and (often reactionary) response to perceived social change; it often seems as if policing, rhetorically at least, thrives on crisis, and that if a crisis cannot be found, policing will gladly create one. (cf. Hall et al. 1978, Clarke 2008) Innovations in policing have been framed as either reactions to specific problems (ranging from 'the War on Drugs' to 'Satanic Panic' to 'the War on Terror') or more generally as a transformation of the basic police role in response to a 'crisis of legitimacy.' (Weisburd and Eck 2004, Willis and Mastrofski 2011) Among the various innovations that have been broadly incorporated into the institution of policing are preventive patrol with the use of patrol cruisers, quick response through 911 or 110 dispatch, SWAT or other tactical response units, specialized gang or narcotics units which are generally given freer rein in targeting specific individuals or demographics[2], hot-spot targeting and statistical data-based policing (i.e. COMPSTAT), community relations departments and image-management campaigns (including the increasing use of social media), civilian review boards, the use of body-worn cameras, and community-oriented policing initiatives.

[2] The modern incarnation of this in Germany is centered around "clans," very loosely defined as criminally active semi-structured organizations centered around immigrant families. Notably, the English word for clan is used, which otherwise would otherwise primarily be used to refer to traditional Scottish clans or more recently in online-gaming, instead of the equivalent German word "Sippe" which is used more generally in anthropology. So far, little academic research has been conducted critically examining this phenomenon or the relation between the presentation of the clan as a social problem and the accompanying expansion of police powers. The evidence presented in media outlets to outline the problem is generally unconvincing, but proposed laws and policing strategies, reflecting those used in the US in the 1980 s, would expand the ability of police to make arrests based on suspicion of clan activity and essentially inflate the statistics, confirming their prior belief in the existence of a problem. (cf. Ghadban 2018) Ghadban, as one of the more prominent proponents of this view in German media, has frequently claimed that "about 75%" of clan member are not 'criminal,' but should apparently still be treated with suspicion due to existing within a "parallel society." Schweitzer (2019) presents a to-date rare sober and critical overview of how this topic has been presented in popular and populist media and been given extra credence through the (mis)use of official statistics. The topic of clans was relatively new and rarely came up during the field work which is central to this work, particularly because residents with immigration backgrounds are less often found in the study area than in more urbanized regions, where the topic has been more openly discussed and in more heated terms. (See also Rauls and Feltes 2021)

These innovations, and countless others implemented by individual organizations, include those that supplement 'normal' police work—defined by at-the-time policing institutional goals, policing cultural values, and everyday routines as perceived by officers, their supervisors, and the public—as well as those that transform, challenge, or supplant traditional understandings of the role of police in society. (cf. Rumbaut and Bittner 1979) The innovations described above have all in some way left their mark on policing—or promise to do so, for example, in the case of body-worn cameras and social media, both relatively young concepts within policing (cf. Goldsmith 2015, Schneider 2018.) At the same time, many of these innovations have pushed policing in what seem to be conflicting directions—police appear to be simultaneously moving in the direction of tolerance and zero-tolerance, conciliation and aggression, prevention and reaction. This may reflect a difference between specific agencies and their choice of strategies (cf. Wilson 1968), but it may also speak to yet another coming crisis of legitimacy and a disconnect between the formal institution of policing and the cultural perceptions that impact how not only citizens, but police officers themselves, approach the work of the police and craft images of what policing is and should be. The fact that policing has always been built on the basis of crime as a social problem coupled with the relatively rarity of experiences of serious crime for most individuals within daily routines reaffirms the importance of media outlets in producing, adapting, modifying, and conveying images and symbols that define the role of police within society.

Key events in policing have always been crucial in cementing public understandings and cultural narratives of the police: in the US such events have included the 1968 Democratic National Convention, where live broadcasts of police aggressively beating protestors without visible provocation were viewed nationwide; the 1991 Rodney King beating, which started a new round of public discussions of police brutality, racism, and oversight and shattered common arguments that excessive police violence was a thing of the past; the 1999 Seattle WTO protests, where within a week a news media skeptical of protestors and taking police perceptions of risk at face value turned against the police as even journalists on the street became victims of a police force who saw everyone not in uniform as an acceptable target; and the 2014 "Ferguson Unrest" and the beginning of the Black Lives Matter movement, which to many Americans was the first public display of the militarization of the police that has drastically accelerated since 2001, as officers in full body armor or tactical camouflage backed by armored personnel carriers and snipers introduced a new image of policing into the public consciousness. In Germany, key events include the 1986 "Hamburger Kessel," in which anti-nuclear protestors were forcibly confined in a small space

for up to 13 hours, New Year's Eve 2015/16 in Cologne (Behrendes 2016), and more recently the police handling of anti-immigrant protests and the 2018 riots in Chemnitz, for which police have been accused of reacting too slowly, selectively overlooking or targeting certain sides, and mishandling the media response.

These key events are important for how they can offer common images of policing, pivotal pictures and narratives that are repeated or used as benchmarks in making comparisons. (Manning 1996, 2003; Manning prefers the term "axial events") Notably, most of these events are—at least in retrospect—seen as presenting a more negative than positive image of the police, hence their value as milestones as well as their use as catalyzers for reform in some cases. (Earl et al. 2003, Sparrow 2016) Negative images of policing events are often depicted culturally as representative of 'the police' as a general category, and not just specific agencies or policies. (cf. Manning 2003) In contrast, more 'positive'—here synonymous with 'functional'—images of the police can be found in presentations of crime, of risk, of victimization or moral outrage, in the media, where the link between crime as a socially harmful action (or 'criminal' as a socially harmful existence) on one end of the spectrum and law enforcement or order-maintenance exemplified by the police as experts is taken for granted. Despite criticism of the police, particularly through the increased visibility of police work through social media and the pervasiveness of cell phone cameras, the broader cultural association between police work as 'making society safer' and crime as the phenomenon which police both identify and combat has not effectively been challenged. The specific forms that police work can take may cause friction, but the nature of policing remains untarnished. To the extent that policing, as an institution, has been forced to respond to possible changes in public perceptions, these responses have primarily been conceived and directed from the organizational level—through public relationships department, image campaigns, and social media—rather than significantly impacting the practice of policing on the street. (Manning 2003, Chermak and Weiss 2005, cf. Kreissl 2008)

Police work is most often performed on a different stage, that of individual encounters occurring every day, with the primary audience simply being those involved. Individual expectations of police work are framed by cultural narratives, by media presentations and second-hand stories, but they are lived through actual encounters with the social world; not just through encounters with crime or of being a victim, suspect or witness, but in every case where an individual must interpret what the police mean: in how they react to the mere presence of police officers driving or walking by, how they respond to them if spoken to, when they choose to approach them or request help, what they view as routine, normal or uninteresting, and what they view as unique, noteworthy, or strange and how

they recount their experiences. Robert Prus (1996) describes how experience is intersubjectively constructed through the use of mediated images:

> People may sometimes retain particularly vivid images of events even when they are unable to define and classify these within their current linguistic terms, but it is only when people are to find ways of sharing their experiences with others that they achieve the potential of turning these experiences into more enduring (i.e., community objectified or signified) features of reality. Thus, the processes of "indicating" (pointing to, drawing attention to, or signifying [things]) and "representing" (illustrating, imitating, describing in words or gestures, writing about, photographing, or recording) become exceedingly consequential in the matter of sharing experiences with others. (12)

Social worlds of policing are maintained through everyday interactions which are mostly mundane, framed against a backdrop of cultural understandings which emphasize action and risk, which view policing as a form of sacrifice or as the 'thin blue line' protecting society from chaos and disorder, but predicated more upon local understandings of immediate social relations and common understandings of problem-solving and compromise. Police work at its most visible—that is, in popular culture, in media, in shared narratives and anecdotes—is big, dramatic, and visible in stark contrast to everyday life: the lived experience of police work not only is most often the opposite, but needs to reconcile these views in order to establish and maintain a relationship with the local community and with those individuals encountered by the police, situation to situation, day in and day out.

2.4 Cultural Narratives and Police Interaction

> Soapy felt a hand laid on his arm. He looked quickly around into the broad face of a policeman.
>
> "What are you doin' here?" asked the officer.
>
> "Nothin'," said Soapy.
>
> "Then come along," said the policeman.
>
> "Three months on the Island," said the Magistrate in the Police Court the next morning.
>
> – O. Henry, *The Cop and the Anthem* (1904)

The present study is an exploration of how police, individually and organizationally, maintain long-term relationships through the management of specific, individualized encounters. Police legitimacy, that is, the "judgements that ordinary citizens make about the rightfulness of police conduct," (Skogan and Frydl 2004: 291) is based primarily in how members of society view police *in relation to society*, conceptually, and their understanding of how well police are fitting to that conception, as well as the various events, trends, and crises that are altering that conception at any point: police legitimacy is a concept which often is expressed through and altered by media presentations and perceptions of police work. (Chernak and Weiss 2004) Ericson (1982) argues that police legitimacy is primarily supported by the concept of crime, in spite of the fact that much police work is unrelated to crime or only includes it as a tertiary variable. Despite decades of academic work arguing that police are primarily engaged in 'order-maintenance' or 'peacekeeping,' (Niederhoffer 1969, Bittner 1970, Black 1980, Ericson 1982, Moskos 2008b) as well as significant efforts by the police to frame themselves this way[3], police are effectively still one half of "cops and robbers," with everyday depictions of police work, particularly in television, movies and social media, emphasizing the law enforcement role and associated powers, including the use of potentially deadly force. (cf. Bielejewski 2016)

Expectations of what police *will* do (not necessarily what they *should* do) are framed by cultural narratives: 'big' stories based on *ideal type* actors and actions—in fictional presentations often represented as 'stock characters'—which most members of society would be expected to understand or extrapolate from even a barebones narrative, even if they are not necessarily considered to be common, plausible, realistic, or even possible. Cultural narratives are often synonymous with stereotypes, tropes, or clichés; in the present conception they simply refer to any story or connection within a story that is assumed by both presenter and audience to be already existing; at their most effective they establish "the mythology of modern life." (Gusfield 1989: 434) Van Maanen (1974) writes that:

> To some, a policeman is a "fucking pig", a mindless brute working for a morally bankrupt institution. To others, a policeman is a courageous public servant, a defender of life and property, regulating city life along democratic lines. To most, a policeman

[3] Exemplified by the most common slogan of policing in Germany, "Dein Freund und Helfer," literally "your friend and helper" and notably using the informal personal pronoun which would not in most cases be expected to be used by police officers with citizens. (cf. Dübbers 2015)

> is merely an everyday cultural stimulus, tolerated, avoided and ignored unless non-routine situational circumstances deem otherwise. Yet, virtually all persons in this society can recognize a policeman, have some conception of what it is he does, and, if asked, can share a few "cop stories" with an interested listener. (53)

Contemporary cultural narratives about police range from relatively benign jokes about police officers and donuts (reinforced through caricaturization in, among other outlets, *The Simpsons* and *Brooklyn 99,* as well as police self-parody) to narratives about police violence which are used to link shootings of unarmed black men to institutional racism. Cultural narratives are relevant particularly through their use as interactional shorthand; personal narratives, whether storytelling as a social act or used as justifications to make actions and decisions socially acceptable, do not need to be explicit or delve deeply into concepts of motivation or agency when understandable cultural narratives can be referred to: for example, one could refer to "losing track of time" as an excuse for being late, a phenomenon that might not personally be experienced or understood in the same way but that is well documented in its usage specifically as an excuse as well as in its experience, or one could refer to "traffic" or "problems with the train," without expecting to be challenged on the specifics that led to the person being late. Cultural narratives are often identified through their subversion, with the assumption being that the standard narrative would be so routine as to not be worth telling, but that *this case* is noteworthy: examples of this range from the biblical "Good Samaritan" to the movie and television trope of large, rough-looking individuals suddenly turning into overly friendly 'softies.'[4] This is often reflected in police storytelling and *war stories,* where greater emphasis is put on stories that communicate not just risk and danger but specifically the unexpected. (Chan 1997, Ford 2003, van Hulst 2013, cf. Ewick and Silbey 1995)

Cultural narratives are significant to police work in ways that have been suggested in the literature but have rarely been made explicit. Specifically, this relevance lies in connecting the macro-level conceptual institution of policing with locally determined organizations and situational encounters between individual officers and residents, as expressed in the following two propositions:

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[4] One contemporary example of policing subversion is the viral "#BacktheBLUEBonnets Challenge" started by the Mineral Well Police Department in Texas. Police officer posed for pictures in fields of flowers in stereotypically 'non-police' poses, producing pictures more reminiscent of wedding photography or inspirational posters than typical police-produced image. Additional memetic elements were often included, such as police officers eating donuts with the caption "doughnut mess with Texas." A minor internet backlash occurred in response to one particular picture, captioned "Felt cute.. might arrest someone later idk."

1. Individuals in society share a general concept of what policing means, who police officers are, and what is expected of them in encounters with police primarily derived from cultural narratives and knowledge produced outside of immediate interaction with police officers; and
2. Police encounters with members of society are primarily guided by or around the assumptions brought to the encounters, and processes of meaning-making which occur within encounters necessarily take this into consideration.

This is not to say that all individuals share the same understanding of police work; rather, the point is that all individuals have *some* understanding of police work, and that police work is structured (organizationally through structure, policy and planning and practically by individual officers) around the fact that individuals will be able to interpret policing symbolism, commands, and definitions with some degree of effectiveness. Police officers, though their understanding of policing likely varies and is certainly more contextual than that which they expect to encounter, need to create intersubjective meaning in communication with others, not 'compromising' their understanding of normative systems but rather implementing practices to manage the situation based on their interpretation of the other participant's interpretation; the interactionist perspective in practice. (cf. Manning 1977)

Gusfield (2000) writes that:

> Sociologists have used the concept of "role" as a way of designating the expectations, duties, and priorities that accrue to the holder of a position in the social organization. To be a mother or father or a child is to assume a set of opportunities connected with those statuses. The concept is, however, at best an abstract version of situated events. As many have pointed out, human action is not so fixed and constrained. The metaphor of the stage is limited. The role that governs an event is often chosen from among diverse possibilities in defining the situation. The situation experience must be provided with a meaning. Human beings transform roles, adapt them to specific persons, to specific situations. In many ways, they play with roles and with rules; they obey them, ignore them, avoid and transform them. (106)

As understandings of the police within society are certainly outside of the control of individual officers, and in most cases outside of the control of even specific departments or organizations, the ascribed social role of the police may not always be the most 'effective' role in handling situations. Police engage in impression management to switch between available roles, but at the same time are constrained by outside as well as interactional factors and the general difficulties inherent in establishing shared meaning. (cf. Cicourel 1980, Strauss

1982a) Scholarly work on policing has often identified conflicts between differing expectations of police—i.e. from the community, from other officers, from bureaucracy, from local government—and these differing expectations have often been managed by the use of differing styles of policing (Wilson 1968) at both the departmental level as well as by individual officers. Ethnographic research on policing has found that 'discrepancies' in police practices which are often viewed institutionally as failures or compromises—such as the giving of a warning where a fine or even arrest would be legally justified—are not reflective of 'bad policing' so much as the application of differing systems of norms in cases where the legal or law enforcement norms, previously assumed to govern all aspects of policing, have little to offer in terms of guidance or 'valued' outcomes. (Bittner 1970, Reuss-Ianni 1983, see also Waddington 1993, Manning 1988 for examinations of how semi-formal police 'coding' to pre-categorize and prioritize situations differs from formal [legal] definitions) Behaviors deviating from the assumed legal-rational, that is, the normative view that police work is simply the detection of crime and the assignment of legally mandated punishments, can be effective in handling situations both because they allow for some form of negotiation—relevant if we consider that police work is more focused on preventing future problems than on punishing those have already occurred with the theoretical assumption that it might have a future preventive effect (cf. Bittner 1974)—as well as because it occurs against the backdrop of the *ideal type* police action strongly based on shared cultural narratives. Police are able to effectively give warnings because the recipient is aware that the next encounter may go much worse.

While the presumption here is that standard and shared cultural understandings of the police exist—that is, stereotypes and tropes that can be, but may not always be, applied to the police generally and define expectations of what they will do in a given situation—it is also assumed that these will vary significantly in salience and applicability from individual to individual. The purpose here is not to examine how individuals in a given community view or act towards the police, but rather to examine how the police act towards their community based on their expectations of how that community (in its multitude of individuals) views, acts and reacts towards the police.

2.5 Negotiated Authority

Dobbs: If you're the police, where are your badges?

Gold Hat: Badges? We ain't got no badges. We don't need no badges. I don't have to show you any stinkin' badges!

– *The Treasure of Sierra Madre* (1948, dir: John Huston)

In contrast to legitimacy, here defined as the broader understanding of how police fit into society, as well as the recognition that a specific individual is, in fact, a police official, *authority* is seen as the ascribed meaning of a variety of potential social roles which govern how police, unlike other social roles, are able to handle the type of situations they are expected to handle. Police work consists of a number of norm-violating practices, actions which non-police individuals could only undertake in very specific situations or at the risk of expecting some form of social sanction (even if it may be limited to strange looks, whispers, etc.) The authority of the police could be understood as the way in which these practices, even the mere presence of the police, are interpreted as constituting an enforcement of certain types of social norms, or legal norms.

Egon Bittner (1974) examined how the development of a police mandate was embedded in historical exigencies, primarily the rise of urbanism and the perception of crime as a problem primarily resulting from unstructured, disordered interactions between strangers. This meant that policing was intended to have a specific focus on formal regulation not only as the method for enforcing order or maintaining the policing, but that the creation and establishing of regulation in social life, replacing more flexible informal systems of regulation or forcing them to conform, was both a means and an end. Bittner writes that:

> Two conditions must be met to satisfy the need for formal governmental control that would bind effectively the behavior of individuals to rules of propriety. The first… is that all controls rest on specific authorization set forth in highly specific legal norms. The second… is that the implementation of the authorizing norm must be entrusted to impersonal enforcement bureaucracies. In sum, "the due regulation and domestic order" in our times is the task of a host of law enforcement bureaucracies, each using procedures legitimized by, and incidental to, the attainment of explicitly formulated legal objectives. (122)

This impersonal enforcement, as conceived within the police mandate, takes on the form of specific types of practices and behaviors which necessarily fit the

criteria of being legitimate (i.e. based on the law and government sanctioning) and fulfilling the ends of the legal norms intended to be injected into societal relations. This is the basis of the institutional role of police, intended to fulfill the bureaucratic objectives of the organization while comporting to a fitting social role, in this case distancing the police and officers from the type of informal relations that were increasingly seen as problematic, mirroring the "shift from reliance on informal mechanisms of traditional authority to reliance on legal rational means." (Bittner 1974: 122, cf. Weber 1958) The police act as a model—instructive, demonstrative, and remonstrative—to alter the behavior of society at large. Bittner remained deeply skeptical that this model could work in practice: it has proven to be both impractical to centrally exercise control over police behavior in the way that bureaucratic institutions claim to do, and unrealistic to expect police to behave as disinterested automatons with no stake in what their work or actions represent beyond the specific concerns of the organization. Though the mandate of the police is based on legal norms and law enforcement, the police have never been subservient to the courts: "Thus, the institutional independence of the police from the judiciary is ultimately based on the realization that the police are inevitably involved in activities that cannot be fully brought under the rule of law." (Bittner 1970: 34) This is particularly relevant when considering that the norms and routines of police work—the life world of policing—remains centered on the idea of establishing and maintain order and selectively invoke legal norms, crime fighting, or institutional constraints in establishing a public police role, but the role acted out by police is not one defined or geared towards a larger or parallel institution, but rather one centered on the institution of policing itself. Yet the institutional role of the police has persevered—though arguably in a way that eschews an appeal to legal rational authority in favor of attempting to establish a newer form of traditional authority (cf. Crank 1994)—according to Bittner because of 1) the establishment of an image of the police as crime-fighters engaged in a war against an encroaching evil, 2) the emphasis in public presentations, training, and career advancement on the use of statistics, crime data, and technical methods which serve to maintain an image of the police as specialists in the field of crime, 3) the existing and publicly visible cooperation between police and prosecutors in the most high profile cases and the necessary function of police in investigation beyond the boundaries of what prosecutors are generally capable of, and 4) the use of specialized units, most obviously detectives but also including crime-focused patrol units (or in Germany the use of specialized units for making arrests in 'higher risk areas.') (1974: 123–124) The police have managed to consistently maintain some form of institutional image (though not *the same image*) and this image itself becomes part of their work—this image is

(ideally) able to affect behaviors in public in the way police work was originally intended (cf. Lyman 1964) without necessarily even needing to resort to the type of legal based enforcement on which that institutional image is based.

Austin Turk (1966) makes a distinction between social norms, which are followed effectively because they are internalized, and cultural norms, which form a realm of contest in enforcing and constraining the behavior of other, stating that:

> Once persons in a collectivity are convinced that some subset of individuals within the collectivity have sufficient power to force others to pay attention to their normative announcements, they may accept announced norms not so much because they understand or "internalize" the norms as because they have learned to defer to the decisions of the powerful subset, i.e., to view that subset as "authorities." The social norm of deference, learned either by direct and unsuccessful conflicts with authorities or through gradual socialization into the authority structure…, may then serve to support a wide variety of cultural norms just because they are "authoritative," i.e., "legal." (345-346)

Considering the norms enforced by authorities, specifically the police, as 'legal norms' suggests a stronger conflict orientation in which police enforce rules and desired changes in behavior that the individual has no desire to follow but does so simply because of deference to authority and/or fear of punishment. While not every case of police intervention reflects this, this understanding does fit to the basic institutional model of policing, in which the capacity to enforce the outcome and official definition of the situation preferred by the police defines both what types of situations police are involved in and how they manage those situations. (Bittner 1970) Also relevant here is Turk's use of *cultural* norms as essentially a form of attempting hegemonic control, in that an understanding of the power—either learned through direct experience with police or 'socialized' through various institutions and cultural depictions, realistically likely a combination of these sources—is necessary in institutionalizing the power of the police and making it into a form of authority that will not need to be overtly expressed or explained. The *institutional role* of the police constitutes this conflict-oriented image of the police[5], in which citizens are expected to show deference with the realization that cooperation can always be secured, and when cooperation is

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[5] Of course, the *conflict* assumptions are hidden and downplayed, specifically as part of this role—the purpose is to ensure cooperation as if there is no other choice, rather than to evoke the specter of conflict. Christie (1977), referring to the larger criminal justice system but relevant to police interventions, states that, "a non-conflict perspective is a precondition for defining crime as a legitimate target for treatment." (4) The idea is essentially to dramatize a situation in which all parties, by the end, formally agree on common understandings of *social*

forthcoming conflict can be averted. Stuart Hall and colleagues in *Policing the Crisis* (1978) refer to the “exhaustion of consent” as (in this case, British) policing domains expanded through the use of criminalization and the politicization of crime and deviance: the proper realm of negotiations over acceptable behavior were firmly declared to be the ballot box, but the police were not to be challenged or questioned. (Loader 1997) Similar processes took place among police in the US and Germany (Garland 2001, Weinhauer 2003, Manning 2012, see also Walker 1992, 1993, Wrocklage 2008, Heinz 2017) as well, with a combination of ‘rationalization’ or professionalism alongside law-and-order politics cementing a model of modern police as technical experts fulfilling a defined role with, from the perspective of the institution and its allies in the spheres of politics and law, clearly defined goals and broad powers to achieve them. This institutional role is recognizable in many typical practices and mannerisms of the police centered around formal definitions of situations (i.e. the use of quasi-legal terminology and an emphasis on formal bureaucratic categories and outcomes) and maintaining ‘professional’ or ‘distancing’ relations between police and non-police. (cf. Van Maanen 1974, Manning 1995)

The authority of the police—essentially the source of their definitional and effective power—has generally been presented in Weberian terms, with only occasional advances or lasting contributions in conceptualizing the organization of policing. (Manning 2012) Weber described three categories of authority and related them to governing norms:

> Charismatic authority sweeps aside old norms and generates charismatically-certified new norms… Traditional authority is legitimated by traditional norms and is additionally circumscribed by them. Legal rational authority rests upon legal norms and is also contained by them. (Spencer 1970: 125-126)

From a bureaucratic or organizational perspective, the authority of the police is considered legal-rational, vaguely suggesting that individuals who have internalized respect for the law will respect the police as legitimate enforcers of such. (Loader 1997, De Lint 1999) Yet views ‘from the street,’ particularly ethnographic work on patrol and beat policing, have tended to present a view of police authority that combines or selects from the different forms in different contexts. (Banton 1964, Bittner 1967/b, Muir 1979, Peterson 2008, cf. Rumbaut and Bittner 1979) Police do not simply ensure (or fail to ensure) compliance and cooperation by invoking the law, legal norms, or even general social norms,

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norms, even if these are rather *cultural* norms, in the sense that they are only being followed due to the invocation of authority.

but rather negotiate through sometimes ritualized sometimes improvised actions ranging from the use of specific rhetoric to coercive force. The legal-rational is one basis for police authority, and its mere invocation can certainly elicit compliance in the vast majority of observable cases, though the specific mechanism and internal reasoning is both varied and theoretically relevant: do the police, following Robert Peel's model of public policing, remind citizens of their civic duty or shared values within society, or are they simply aware of the consequences of ignoring or resisting the police: monetary penalties, physical violence, and imprisonment? There is no singular answer to this question, the relevance for the current analysis lies in how police present their authority, and how they take on and create unique or fixed roles: how the part of 'police officer' is played.

Social roles are made, not taken. (Shearing and Ericson 1991) While the use of justifications and accounts to align actions taken to the presumed rules—formal or informal—governing a social situation and setting has been well established in interactionism and ethnomethodology, the existence of relatively stable social roles is often taken for granted. The negotiation of order implies a negotiation over what roles mean while action is still taking place. Even established conceptions of social roles may only be clear or obvious in very specific and clearly defined settings: a physician in a hospital may not be able to avoid the assumptions that patients have of what it means to be a 'doctor,' but being a medical professional may be more or less relevant when that individual is simply with friends in a café. (cf. Becker et al. 1961) The availability of 'stock roles' in some cases can ease or unbalance the negotiation in favor of one side: it is for this reason that Bittner (1970) notes that police rarely, if ever, lose in conflicts over defining situations (see also Van Maanen 1974, Manning 1977); the ability to use force belongs to most possible understandings of what it means to be a police officer in dealing with conflicts.

De Lint (1999) describes how changes in presentations and the strategic use of images maintains the authority of the police even as "traditional institutional bases of police authority" (128) are weakened, emphasizing that "from the ground level of police culture there is already a long tradition of realism and pragmatism in the forging of presentations." (129) The institutional role of the police has both a political dimension, i.e. the mandate of the police and its role in terms of maintaining a more-or-less defined political order (Turk 1977), and also a pragmatic one, which must link the political function to social worlds, everyday life, the community, and society. Police have legitimacy in terms of law enforcement, but the law is rarely enforced simply for the purpose of being enforced, and is often consciously not enforced where it could be. (Girtler 1980, Ohlin 1993) The common police functions described as peacekeeping or order maintenance

are unable to function as such without at least a plausible appearance of shared values between the institution of policing and the context (i.e. society) in which that policing is taking place, commonly described as 'the rule of law.' (cf. De Lint 1999) Policing—as a bureaucratic social institution—has since its inception experienced pressures toward intervening into social relations and systems which might otherwise be governed by more informal, local, or community norms and values, adapting "disembedding mechanisms" (Giddens 1991: 17–20) to establish a new and uniform order, whether referred to as safety, security, or public order. (cf. Ericson and Haggerty 1997, Harcourt 2001) At the same time, the pragmatics of policing—particularly at the street level but also in terms of public relations and image work (Manning 1982)—can lay bare the discord between institutional ideals of order and the chaos of everyday life. Image work encompasses "all activities which police forces engage [to] project meanings of policing" (Mawby 2002: 1) ranging from institutional and organizational orientations (Wilson 1968, Chernak and Weiss 2005) to the use of public-relations (Strecher 1971), policing control over media and pop-cultural depictions (Manning 1996, Bielejewski 2016, Schneider 2018), more recently social media (Schneider 2016) and, of particular interest to the case at hand, the situational, dramaturgical and symbolic use of police imagery, tropes, and cultural narratives in various forms of interactions between police officers and the public. (Meehan 1992, Walker 1996, Manning 2003, Peterson 2008)

Overlooking the fact that officers themselves are individuals and just as likely to be making token gestures toward institutional ideals while decisively acting towards the fulfillment of personal, community, ideological, spiritual etc. ideals, it is a reality of police work that is must be conducted within a *social space,* and the most effective way to avoid making every invocation of state authority into a potential conflict between 'high' and 'low' systems of order is simply to address the issues in terms that will be acceptable in the relevant social space. Police officers can, essentially, tell a story that will be believable to the audience in front of them—more believable than a story that tells the audience "you don't need to understand," or "this is our business, not yours."[6] Community-oriented policing has emphasized the (arguably overstated) commonality between basic norms of

[6] The contemporary emphasis on "procedural justice" as a proposed guiding principal of police reform within police science, though more in-depth, essentially relies on the ability for police to clearly and effectively communicate what they are doing and contextualizing this within larger justice processes as a way to avoid conflict, suggesting both that this would encourage police to be aware of their goals and constraints and to follow them, as well as that police actions and decision-making would be more palatable to residents if made more visible *in situ.* (Tyler and Wakslak 2004).

order among police officers (if not at the level of the institution itself, cf. Reuss-Ianni 1983) and local communities but in practice underemphasized the need for multidirectional communication to not only establish a shared understanding of norms but also to establish that this understanding is shared. More recent scholarship has at times emphasized the drifting apart of formal state authority and that of the police (Loader and Walker 2001, Sklansky 2011, cf. Manning 2003, 2012) based to some extent on the significant—and theoretically challenging—expansion of forms of private security and challenges to the core police role (Spitzer and Scull 1977): this represents the renewed salience of the observations of Bittner (1965, 1970) and others (cf. Wilson and Kelling 1982, Goldstein 1990, Kelling and Coles 1996) that what police do is so dissociated from the formal rationalizations that the institutional ideals are practically unattainable, that the legal-rational authority attributed to the police is little more than an appearance and a rhetorical toolkit. Efforts to alter the practices or ideological basis of the police aside, the interactionist methodological approach advocated by Egon Bittner, Peter Manning, and others would not discount the legal-rational authority simply because it is posited as an 'illusion' but rather would question exactly how this illusion has been maintained and implemented to allow it to remain so strongly identified with policing.

2.5.1 The Institutional Authority of the Police

The police demonstrate a form of institutional authority that has long been the subject of sociological inquiry, most often associated with Weber's work on bureaucracy. (Spencer 1970) Kenneth Burke's (1989) approach to authority, with an emphasis on conflict being resolved through the establishment and presentation of hierarchies, could also be applied to the police, which would emphasize the establishment of a situational order which mirrors a desired moral order: this can be seen in the common association of crime or perceived criminogenic areas or even social groups as 'dirty,' 'filthy' or 'scum,' and as police work as 'cleaning up the streets.' (cf. Gusfield 1963) The hierarchy of police over citizens is not universal or applicable to every situation, and various rhetorical strategies and practices could be observed in which citizens attempt to subvert or escape their ascribed hierarchical position. At the same time, some police practices would defend against this: while the rhetoric used by policing has been included in ethnographic research on policing (as well as many critical approaches) for decades, specific interest in the use of language by police as a practice for defining situations, maintaining power dynamics, establishing a hierarchy, and implementing

an interaction order has been limited to a relatively small number of authors and largely ignored in more 'mainstream' policy-oriented research. (cf. Manning 1982, 1989, 1995, Ericson 1982, Meehan 1992, Campbell 2004, Huey 2007, Mensching 2007, Hunold 2011, 2018, see also Bourdieu 1991, Chan 1997)

A slightly more recent incarnation can be found in Erving Goffman's dramaturgical approach to situational social relations. Goffman, though more often associated with enclosed 'total institutions' and psychiatric control, often considered the police as an example in discussing everyday social practices, and was among the first to hint at the 'ritual' qualities of many interactions involving the police. (Goffman 1967, 1971 cf. Behr 2006) Goffman (1983) emphasized the need to study situated practices, to examine:

> the social arrangements enjoyed by those with institutional authority – priests, psychiatrists, school teachers, police, generals, government leaders, parents, males, whites, nationals, media operators, and all other well-placed persons who are in a position to give official imprint to versions of reality. (17)

It is intentional that Goffman's list of the bearers of institutional authority includes alongside ascribed, even uniformed, institutional roles, generic indicators of societal power dynamics (i.e. race and gender), as well as more obviously socially flexible roles such as parents and citizens. Goffman's implication is not that institutional realities are constructed and enforced in one general and identifiable manner, but rather that different forms of action are used in negotiations based on the statuses and roles which participants can claim: a police officer bears a generalized form of institutional authority which means that, for example, the filing of an official report creates a bureaucratic reality which would afterwards be difficult to challenge, but that same police officer might have no immediate advantage when attempting to convince his son's math teacher that his son deserves a better grade. The institutional context is key here; but the police, unlike many of the other typical examples of structure-based authority (i.e. those roles which derive their authority from a formal organization with claims to represent a larger institution and its goals) do not have an easy to identify scope or arena of authority. While the institutional relations between prisoners and guards are (at least theoretically) relatively straightforward within the confines of a prison, these relations are supported by the fact that everyone in the prison is easily and consistently identifiable as either someone who enforces rules or someone against whom rules are enforced. (Sykes 2007) At which point the institutional authority of the police comes into play remains a question embedded not just in interactional or dramaturgical understandings of social action but also one of politics,

ideology, and concepts of democracy, fairness, and social progress. (Remington 1965, Manning 2005)

The police differ also from a more stereotypical bureaucratic model, in that their institutional power is not solely in *post hoc* definition of situations: the police define scenes while they are still ongoing. (Bittner 1970, Feest and Blankenburg 1972) This means that the institutional authority of the police must be found both within their structures, forms, and organizational networks (i.e. the bureaucracy and the official working relationship between police agencies and courts, civic administrations, media, and various other bureaucratic agencies) as well as in the power of the police role to affect ongoing situations by altering the understanding of power dynamics (in favor of the police) in enough situations to normalize a police role. Egon Bittner (1970) identified this form of authority as stemming from the capacity of the police to use coercive force and the resulting situation in which police (individually and organizationally) develop practices to avoid having to demonstrate that force in most situations, while still being reliant on the broader understanding by citizens that the capacity to use force remains in play.

The authority of the police has been typically conceived of within the frameworks maintained by the institution of policing itself: incidents and case-work. That is, policing interactions are viewed within the boundaries of temporal and geographic relevance established by the officers involved (or their superiors.) Yet the authority of the police is not only invoked or interpreted within society in cases in which police signal that the immediate situation is a 'police encounter.' (cf. Van Maanen 1978) Police officers simply walking or driving down the street may not need to even notice a passerby for that passerby to notice the officers and possibly even modify their behavior, such as by avoiding jaywalking even in a place and time where it normally wouldn't be given a second thought. Police officers in restaurants or cafes will expect to be treated differently without even demanding or desiring special treatment, and often their continuing presence is desired by owners as a way to maintain the *image* of safety. (cf. Kelling and Coles 1996) The institutional image of the police is in a way a fallback—it is the image of the police that is assumed until it is challenged, primarily because so much of the organization of the police is centered around promoting and maintaining this image. (cf. Bittner 1965, Manning 2012) While its basis is the legal-rational authority of the bureaucratic organization, it shares traditional elements to the extent that the police represent a *normative* order, and can communicate to society with the language of symbolic values rather than only through punitive enforcement. At the same time, the institutional role is strongest in its use of rituals and common symbols—communication and negotiation over values, norms, desirable

outcomes etc. can take the police officer out of this role and recast him or her as something beyond the institution, as someone in a permanent liminal state (Turner 1967, 1969, see also Drummond 2016) who is not quite one thing or another, as both a part of the community, sharing broad notions of 'community values' and context but also as heir to the hegemonic institutionalized perspective of the state and its skepticism towards compromise or haggling.

2.5.2 Situational and Personal Sources of Authority

> "…all policemen will agree on this point, methods that *simply* follow universalistic rules are also ordinarily ill considered. Thus, very often one hears officers explaining that while some procedure is *normally* indicated, in 'this particular situation' the norm must be suspended in favor of certain particular considerations." (Bittner 1970: 89–90)

Institutional authority is considered here both based on the expectations citizens have of the police and the presentation of a specific, related, image by the police themselves. Dramaturgically, not every presentation of institutional authority can be effective, and not every situation is seen by police as suitable for such a presentation. Goldsmith (2010) notes that:

> Appearing 'normal' is becoming more challenging for police. Police performances today are more 'subject to disruption' than previously. Impression management is less within the control of the police or indeed government authorities than before… The police are no longer the only actors, nor do they control all elements of stage production. (917)

While this is primarily intended to refer to the availability of cell phones and social networking to share images of police misconduct, these forms already imply the availability of critical understandings of resistance to the 'normal' police authority. The argument that impression management is often out of the hands of the police reaffirms the importance of how police present themselves within interactions. Further, it suggests the important point that the *institutional role* of the police is an ideal type bureaucratic / interactive fiction: applying fixed institutional roles to differing circumstances, individuals, and settings will lead to a variety of outcomes, some of which may simply look bad for the police (regardless of to what extent the decisions made were justified or in line with proper procedure.) (cf. Linneman 2017) A *pure* institutional role cannot actively be taken, (Blumer 1966, cf. Goffman 1981) just as "formal structures represent an

ideally possible, but practically unattainable state of affairs." (Bittner 1965: 242) The institution role is based on—and attempts to reinforce—the appearance of the formal structures of policing, but is also limited by the intangibility of those structures. (cf. Bernard et al. 2005) The more entangled a police officer becomes in a situation, the more the abstract and fixed categories that conform to that role will weaken and become 'unrealistic' to those involved in the interaction; the officer will become more visible as *a person within a role*. The institutional role functions based on its association with authority; in line with Weber's observations on authority (1958, cf. Spencer 1970), its 'polar opposite' is a social norms approach, which in this case would fit more strongly to the *personal role*. An individual who is fully recognized based on individual characteristics and personal relationships and also happens to be a police officer might still be able to perform policing tasks which involve friends or family, but would not be able to maintain the 'bureaucratic fiction' of the institutional role (at least not without risking role strain and the violation of some general social norms about how one is expected to act towards friends and family.) A personal role in the context of policing is, of course, equally an ideal type construction, in the sense that not only every relationship, but every imaginable situation, would involve a different understanding of the specific role of the individual.

Institutional roles erode through interaction and exposure to various types of interactions—individuals are forced to accept 'social realities' or risk awkward, absurd, and possibly conflict-prone situations, e.g. when a police officer is unwilling to 'break character' when greeted by someone who knew them prior to the encounter, or is unwilling to admit that a mistake was made even when it is obvious to all present. (cf. Van Maanen 1973, Skolnick 1985) Personal roles became confused or strained when they are involved in situations which involve the police and some level of formal structure. Institutional roles, specifically as an ideal type construction, are anticipated and acted towards by citizens, specifically in brief, distant, or non-engaged encounters (i.e. when citizens, merely seeing a police officer or the suggestion of police presence, modify their behavior) and common police practices seem geared towards maintaining this role and avoiding challenging this institutional assumption.[7]

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[7] E.g. in the US, the use of formal technical vocabularies or jargon even in interactions with citizens, along the lines of "please remain inside the vehicle" in place of "stay in the car." This does not appear to have a direct equivalent within German policing, but the situational use of formal 'polite' or informal 'direct' language is a more obvious example, code-switching between local dialect and 'standard language' and even uses of tone, volume, the use of longer or shorter sentence and phrases, and other communicative elements have a bearing in how police appear to be presenting themselves as acting within an institutional role

At a theoretical level, this involves a pull towards institutional roles, as citizens will essentially have no alternative but to view the police within this generalized frame, and even as it erodes as a communicative frame, it still accurately represents the hierarchy and power-dynamics of the situation; even cases where personal relationships are involved will involve a tendency to make overtures towards institutional roles, both to satisfy defined institutional demands and goals (i.e. a reported crime must still be handled and reported as a crime, regardless of who the victim is) and to consciously avoid the appearance of selective treatment of a conflict of interest. (Macintyre and Prenzler 1998) At the same time, this institutional role will erode and be contextualized resulting in a new *situational role*, lying on a generalized spectrum between the poles of institutional and personal roles. Situational roles, and the forms of authority they convey, are highly individualized and need to be constantly negotiated: they represent an injection of ‘personal’ characteristics into situations which could otherwise be institutionally defined using formal categories, representing both ‘concessions’ by officers to the fact that the purely institutional role is not tenable as well as conscious choices in tactics and style to allow for a more realistic, overt, and personal form of negotiation: of course, both parties are likely aware that a police officer can unilaterally claim an institutional role at any point, meaning that the overt negotiations, friendly requests, and small talk by police is often more dramatized than authentic: the use of situational roles allows more flexibility in police interactions, resisting (or rejecting) the use of strict formal categories of actors, incidents, and outcomes (without rejecting the ability to later re-implement them.) Of interest are the practices used by police to establish different forms of situational authority as well as practices to assert or maintain their institutional authority.

2.6 Community Policing and Policing a Community

The dominant ideology of policing in the US, UK and (with some caveats) Germany today is community-oriented policing. Declaring this an official ideology should not, of course, be conflated with a change in the actual practice of police work; the NYPD and other major US police departments have become infamous for touting community-oriented policing while relying on strategies of zero-tolerance, stop and frisk, and aggressive intervention which undermine the emphasis on community cooperation suggested by proponents of community

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or as allowing that role to situationally erode. (Hunold et al. 2016 cf. Burke 1966, Edmonson 1984, Fish 1989, Shon 2000)

policing. (Waldeck 1999, Harcourt 2001, Manning 2003) Community-policing as an ideology is best considered as a form of image work, as communications policing (Ericson et al. 1993) which attempts to alter the image of the police organizationally and as social actors in the perceptions of *some residents* in a way that better allows the police to perform the work which is valued within the policing organization and/or institution. Additionally, a great deal of the focus within the broader realm of community policing has been on strategies and tactics such as crime mapping, 'hot spot' policing and other (ideally) more effective versions of traditional proactive forms of policing with new terms such as "intelligence-led policing" or "smart policing." (Manning 2012, Feltes 2014, Trujillo and Vitale 2019) This is not to suggest that community values, input or partnerships play no role in contemporary policing: in fact, they have often been shown to do so (Jenkins and DeCarlo 2015) including in the present case. The major discrepancy is whether this is a practical and applicable theory of policing or simply an attempt to turn the spotlight onto a different part of the stage.

Kelling and Coles (1996), though ultimately advocating for community-oriented policing, pose questions of how this paradigm can be identified or implemented which raise further questions about how it differs from 'traditional' policing:

> 'What constitutes community policing?' When departments tack overtime foot or bicycle patrol onto an otherwise unchanged 911 strategy – even with a specific mandate to restore order in certain neighborhoods – does this constitute community policing? Does having eight or so community officers out of a total of 400 police officers mean that a department has implemented community policing? Is aggressive order maintenance coupled with a strong anticrime orientation, as undertaken by the NYPD, antithetical to community policing? (157-158) In reality, community policing is nothing less than a completely new paradigm, in which a focus on crime prevention replaces the old reactive policing model. (158)

Community policing in Germany is primarily relevant for three reasons:

1) A significant deal of the (international) policing literature either accepts community-policing assumptions, challenges those assumptions, or examines modern policing against this backdrop of organizational reform and image work;
2) Community policing has been either officially or tacitly accepted within German policing (Feltes 2014) paralleling (with a delay) the transition away from policing as the protection of state interests to a generalized service-provider

orientation (Frevel 2003, Kreissl 2008, Behrendes 2013, Dübbers 2015, Ohder and Schöne 2018, see also Behr 2000b);

3) The most (organizationally, if not locally) visible element of German community-oriented policing is the use of special units or assigned officer roles as community-contact officers, including the Brandenburger *Revier-polizei*; the earliest versions or precursors of these units could be found in West Berlin after 1974, but the Eastern precursor was the *Abschnitts-bevollmächtiger*[8] or ABV, established in 1952 based on the Soviet model. In the police organization studied well over half of working Revierpolizei officers had begun as ABVs and generally described their work simply as a continuation with new symbols.

The first part speaks to the triadic nature of the term police: it can refer to the institution in a systemic or cultural sense (i.e. American or German police, or even police as a general concept), to a specific organization at a defined jurisdictional level (such as the Newark Police Department, Rutgers University Police Department, Polizei Hessen [the State Police of Hessen], or Polizeipräsideum Nordhessen [one of six jurisdictional divisions in the state of Hessen]), and to individual officers, whether considered in the abstract or as roles, as working individuals performing different forms of police work, or as fully-fledged individuals with lives, interests, and opinions that extend beyond (but may also be reflected in) their work. These distinctions are important in how they present differing concepts of image work—the image of which 'police' is being managed?—as well as how they speak to the different conceptions of relations between police and

[8] I will not attempt to translate this term, apart from suggesting that it indicates the authority invested in the officer. The term, particularly the abbreviated "ABV" is still in common use both within the Revierpolizei and in cultural expressions of East German nostalgia, but the term as used appeared to be more relevant to how the officers themselves were perceived rather than the literal meaning or a deeper linguistic reading of the term coming into play—it should be noted here that the transition into Revierpolizei involved a referendum over how the new unit would be called which specifically excluded the earlier term, ostensibly for a narrative of a 'clean break' and to avoid ABV / Revierpolizei officers being associated with the excesses of the East German SED government. Anecdotal evidence and discussions with various officers and older residents suggested that, at least in their views, the insecurity over the image of ABV officers was more a product of Western uncertainty and distrust more than reflective of community angst, with the locally-based ABV being clearly separated from the secret and political policing of the Ministry for State Security in the mind of many or most community members, at least those who had contact with Revierpolizei during the field research. (cf. Ohder and Schöne 2018)

community (at the same time, community can similarly be constructed at varying levels.)

The second point is relevant only to the extent that community policing has tended to guide police image campaigns within Germany in the context of a transition to a 'service model,' but little—though still very significant—empirical research has examined changes in terms of policing practices and everyday interactions. (cf. Behr 2000, 2006) Though this might not be attributable to the implementation of community-policing (or its rhetoric), a general consensus seems to exist that German police are overall 'friendlier' and less aggressive than their American, British, or European counterparts (Endruweit 1979, Hunold 2011, Lukas and Gauthier 2011, Hunold et al. 2016, cf. Klukkert et al. 2009); this point should not be overstated, however, and is only made here to suggest that the differences between policing in Germany (and more particularly within specific organizations, states, regions, and cities within Germany) may not be linearly related to the adoption of a US model of community policing but rather that deeper cultural and structural factors may just as easily play a role, and that the relatively successful adoption of this philosophy or ideology may be more due to its ease of fit to the existing realities and extant common images of policing than any changes resulting from its implementation. To this point it should be noted that, unlike the comparatively younger police in Hessen with whom I've had contact, police officers in Brandenburg in non-administrative positions encountered through the study were rarely if ever familiar with the formalized concepts of community-policing, "Broken Windows" theory, etc., and did not generally describe their work as based on a specific theory beyond a 'common sense' view of how to maintain order while avoiding conflict. (cf. Crank 1994)

Community policing emerged as a cultural reaction to the increasing problematization and politicization of crime in the US and UK throughout the 1970 s and 1980 s. (cf. Hall et al. 1978) Though reform has essentially been a constant within Anglo-American policing, community policing was firmly within a trend of attempting to distance the image of policing away from one of an impersonal bureaucracy lacking in concern for residents, alongside similar but less influential 'movements' such as team policing and problem-oriented policing. (1990) Chiefly associated with the "Broken Windows" theory put forth by James Q. Wilson and George Kelling in 1982, community policing came to dominate the rhetoric and public relations strategies of first the NYPD and soon almost all major US departments. Critics including Peter Manning emphasize that community policing is more rhetoric than reality, as the tactics that have come to define it, particularly stop and frisk and zero-tolerance, bear little resemblance to the ideological tenets of the approach beyond an emphasis on 'taking minor crimes seriously.'

While the tactical or mechanistic basis of Broken Windows cited a great deal of interactionist and ethnographic field work (Kelling 1999) and attempted to reconcile the image of the police with the realities of street-level policing, the image of policing that was offered as a replacement was hardly 'softer.' (cf. Harcourt 2001) Broken Windows emphasized the idea that police needed local knowledge to know which problems were 'serious' and by showing concern could effectively involve the community, rather than following the stricter institutional model of only involving the community within the victim-offender-witness triad. It also emphasized the role of the 'beat cop' and foot patrol—the mainstay elements of East German ABVs and community-oriented officers in Germany today. Kelling and Coles (1996) discuss Kelling's observations of the realities of city policing:

> Relatively little training or guidance was given to foot patrol officers, who were pretty much left to their own devices on beats. Yet in the myriad variety of neighborhoods officers patrolled, Kelling found that they acted in a surprisingly uniform fashion. Immersing themselves in the lives of their neighborhoods, officers were well-known, often by name, to area regulars – residents, merchants, and street people alike – and knew many of these individuals by name as well. Foot patrol officers kept abreast of local problems, assumed special responsibility for particular locations or persons, developed regular sources of information (apartment managers, merchants, street persons), became regulars at local restaurants, checked "hazards" such as bars… and in other ways came to know and be known on their beats. Finally, in collaboration with and on behalf of citizens, officers established "rules of the street" that were commonly known and widely accepted by "respectable people" as well as "street people." (17)

This establishing of these 'rules of the street,' not only fixed rules but also defining when, where, and, presumably, by whom, certain actions could be taken has elsewhere been defined as a core policing activity within the context of order maintenance. (Bittner 1967, Meehan 1992, Behr 2000) The paradox here is that Wilson, Kelling, and Coles argue for a new model of policing based on the argument that it is already being done. The appeal to traditional authority is clear in much of the pleas for a broader implementation of community policing with the implication that prior to the 1960 s policing was comparatively conflict free and police officers enjoyed significantly more respect within their communities. (Harcourt 2001, cf. Crank 1994, Belina 2016) The goal seems to be to apply this mythologized view of the past to the present. In terms of practical work, it is worth asking to what extent the lack of resources or departmental attention served as the impetus for officers to look for help and seek a secondary mandate among the residents they were assigned to police.

Manning (2003) writes that:

> Any control strategy is profoundly moral because its operation reflects social resources, the norms and values available applicable to a situation, as well as the intention of the participants to maintain the appearance of moral conformity. (19–20)

The key to the Broken Windows model in particular is the assumption that disorder and feelings of risk or fear are more relevant to stakeholders (i.e. the local community) than the institutionally-defined goals of criminal and ordinance enforcement. This perspective is not new to studies of the police, but the question remains of how disorder is defined—the crucial but suspect assumption here is that most communities will share similar expectations and perspectives and that these will in turn be recognized and internalized by local police. This is moral work of the highest degree, and a significant amount of criticism has addressed how emphasizing disorder leads to police targeting the socially marginal, though this is no means unique to Broken Windows-inspired policing. (Quinton 2011, Marat 2019, cf. de Maillard et al. 2016)

German police, regardless of whether the rhetoric of community policing is invoked as such, were found by de Maillard et al. (2016)—in comparison to French police—to be more motivated to engage in order maintenance tasks, and more likely to see peacekeeping and order-maintenance as 'real' police work. (see also Hunold et al. 2010 for an evolving picture of policing within German communities) At the same time it must be noted that, unlike the French (or US or UK) situation, the policing of 'minor disorder' is relegated to a separate office, the *Ordnungsamt,* meaning that German police officers arguably have much more leeway in choosing when to involve themselves in 'low' tasks and when to overlook or delegate the situation to another agency. The Revierpolizei in Brandenburg, in particular, have a broad mandate but few specified expectations, and the type of tasks performed often overlapped with the work of the Ordnungsamt.[9] As has been found elsewhere in Germany, the community officers

[9] From a US-UK perspective, the German *Ordnungsämter* are both theoretically interesting and conceptually frustrating—unlike 'normal' police they are locally-based with powers and responsibilities based on local regulations and demands. (Hirschmann 2014, see Pütter 2006 and Ohder 2014 for German-language discussions of the overlap between state police and Ordnugsamt) While they are officially and decidedly not police, in most jurisdictions their uniforms and vehicles use the same colors and patterns, with local offices increasingly tending towards the more 'militant' darker look of modern police rather than the older 'civil servant' look exemplified by a light blue dress uniform. The city of Frankfurt a.M. has since 2007 operated a "Stadtpolizei" (lit: City Police) under the Ordnungsamt framework, which has since been replicated in several other cities, with a growing tendency toward police markings and vocabulary specifically since 2016 and an expanded arsenal of (primarily non-lethal) weapons available to some agencies. These have been some of several recent developments,

of the Revierpolizei tend to emphasize maintaining good relations with community members over crime-fighting, but in the same way 'minor disorder' problems are sometimes turned over or left to the Ordnungsamt who are more effectively able to present their work as institutionally and bureaucratically necessary. (cf. Hunold 2015) While Kelling and Coles discourage focusing specially on using special units (1996: 160) the Revierpolizei and similar community-contact officers in Germany constitute a more hybrid form in that, even as a 'special unit,' they perform essentially regular policing duties, with full police (and investigative) authority.

The central but easily overlooked question of community policing is then by which standards police develop 'rules of the street' or understandings of community values. The ontology of police expectations of normality is beyond the scope of an ethnographic study, but expressions and rhetorical invocations of normalcy and deviance were key to the present analysis. Additionally, the involvement or exclusion of community members and groups, particularly in the use of formal, semi-formal, or informal partnerships (cf. Ohder and Schöne 2018) was explored both as a practical matter and in how the police (symbolically) legitimate communal and community action.

2.7 Violence and the Police

Violence, alongside crime, is one of the strongest associated symbols of policing, and even in its absence—in this case, its relative rarity in terms of actual occurrences among the Revierpolizei in Brandenburg—it plays a significant role in how stories are told and how many encounters are structured. This concerns not just the use of violence—sanctioned or not—by police, a primary fixation of predictive quantitative analyses of policing, but to a greater degree the relationship of violence to the concept of a police self-image. One of the most-cited 'findings' of the ethnographic literature is Egon Bittner's description of the core powers of the police stemming from their ability to use force, but as Bittner made no claims applying this to *police in general* outside of the inner city area he observed, it is worth exploring how useful this assumption is in exploring policing in a relatively low-crime, low-violence rural area. (cf. Manning 2003) The idea that symbolic

alongside volunteer 'watch' officers (Wachpolizei), which has challenged modern conceptions of urban policing in Germany. (Kreissl 2008, cf. Behrendes 2013) Within the study area in Brandenburg and during the study period, however, the Ordnungsamt fulfilled a more 'traditional' role, involving a significant overlap and cooperation with the police and Revierpolizei in particular, and other experimental or hybrid organizations did not exist.

violence, that a form of "bureaucratically symbolized communication" (Bittner 1970: 39), underpins every interaction between police and community, between police officers and residents, remains present, and is worth exploring particularly in how violence is dramatized and symbolically indicated without the use of physical force. While one stated goal at the outset of this research was to avoid a fixation on violence, the concept proved relevant enough even in cases where its absence seemed telling, for example in police officers actively downplaying the relevance of violence to their job and specifically contrasting themselves with their understanding of police in the US.

Violence plays essentially a two-sided role with regards to policing within a community, depending on who 'owns' the violence. Violence as a problem is, as suggested, easily definable by the police and easily used to justify the role and actions of the police; this becomes problematic when violence occurs from within a community that the police (as an organization or as individuals) does not want to problematize. While many minor offenses can often by rhetorically 'written off' by police officers with simple narratives such as 'boys will be boys' violence is often more problematic to narratively frame, particularly when the victim comes from the same community or background. Violence employed by the police is equally problematic when the target of that violence cannot effectively be disregarded or framed as an outsider—culturally police officers are often visible at either the extremes of openly celebrating their use of violence, particularly in the US, or attempting to minimize it or treat it 'clinically,' as an emotionally neutral experience reserved for the proper situation. (Goldsmith 2010, 2015, cf. Rumbaut and Bittner 1979) The fact that violence is typically rare for the more generalist officers representative of small town policing—including the Brandenburger Revierpolizei—means that incidents of violence became harder to put into a narrative frame or to incorporate into a policing self-identity without reverting to the traditional, stereotypical 'us vs. them' mentality considered characteristic of many urban departments or special units. (cf. Skolnick 1971, Van Maanen 1974, Behr 2000, Marks 2004) The potential for violence, regardless of its actual use, retains its salient symbolism for policing, and it is up to individual officers and agencies to manage this symbolism in ways that communicate with the public at various levels without coming across as threatening, reckless, or even sadistic: this is one of the key challenges facing modern policing in an era of social media and community policing.

One of the few consistent beliefs in Anglo-American criminology is the idea that the police, are, despite popular images of the police firmly establishing them as, for example, the cops perpetually opposed to the robbers, not truly a law enforcement institution, but rather an institution oriented towards the maintenance

of order which includes among its toolkit and occasional area of responsibility the enforcement of the criminal law. To sociologists, who were crucial in establishing this understanding of the police role in society (cf. Banton 1964, Bittner 1963, Westley 1970, Manning and Van Maanen 1978) the reason that the police have, essentially, let themselves be defined primarily based on this one aspect of their work, is obvious. Laws are easily defensible, and once invoked are not easily dispelled outside of a courtroom or in communications between attorneys and prosecutors. Order, on the other hand, raises the specter of control: *whose* order?

2.8 Whose Order? Police Culture and Policing Norms

> "To ensure the adoration of a theorem for any length of time, faith is not enough; a police force is needed as well."
>
> – Albert Camus, *The Rebel* (1950)

Police officers use a variety of coercive, persuasive and negotiation-based practices to both define and, based on that definition of the situation, resolve the conflict or elements of the situation considered problematic. Official narratives are created to reconcile the problematic behavior which the police attempted to hinder, sanction, or alter with formal policy, the law, and community standards. (Meehan 1986, Crank 1994, Manning 1995, 2012) Yet these narratives—by design—do not necessarily accurately reflect the reasoning behind the choice to intervene or use different tactics or approaches, and the creation of official reports is better seen as an institution practice intended to fit actual practices to the pre-existing frames required at an institutional level. (cf. Johnson 1970, Loftus 2009b, see also Fish 1989) The implications of the literature on police discretion are that police do not simply enforce the law as it is written, for a variety of reasons, because the law itself is an abstract that needs to be actively applied to a situation. (Turk 1966, Bittner 1970, McGowan 1972) The modern approach to professional police work—community-policing initiatives notwithstanding—emphasizes preventive patrol mixed with calls for service, and the gap between citizen demands for action and clearly demarcated lawbreaking can be significant; more relevant, as suggested by the use of discretion as a core policing tactic, is the use of selective enforcement or under-enforcement, potentially (though not necessarily) in response to community norms. (Bittner 1967, 1974, Schubert 1979, Kelling 1999, Manning 1988) Reiss (1971) notes that "many citizens have only a vague understanding of the difference between civil, private, and

criminal matters." (77) The question here, then, is how police respond to situations where citizen or community demands are a mismatch with legal categories defining which tasks or concerns are within the purview of policing. A broader typology would encompass situations in which police are required to intervene, situations in which police are able but not required to do something, and cases in which the police have no authority or ability to do much at all. Cases of the second type would best display to what extent community values, situational factors, and local connections (such as personal relationships or unofficial 'understandings' between agencies) impact what issues and situations become 'normal' police work. (cf. Ohder and Schöne 2018)

If policing decisions about how to handle any particular encounter—or even whether to get involved at all—cannot be claimed to be based specifically and solely on the criminal law as written or public ordinances, what norms, values, pressures, or sources of knowledge guide these decisions? Skolnick (1971) has described the police "working personality" as an outcome of police occupational culture and the unique societal positioning of police, in which officers:

> tend to develop ways of looking at the world distinctive to themselves, cognitive lenses through which to see situations and events. The strength of these lenses may be weaker or stronger depending on certain conditions, but they are grounded upon the same axis. (42)

The significant literature on police culture—primarily based on the US, UK and other English-speaking countries—has presented a generally conservative, tradition-oriented policing culture, though consistent findings have been a tendency for officers to become more tolerant and empathetic as they become older or more experienced. (Chan 1997, Paoline 2001, 2003, Loftus 2009b) The original presentation of policing culture as both monolithic and homogeneous has also increasingly been challenged. (Reussi-Ianni 1983, Fielding 1988, Manning 2005, Behr 2006, Mensching 2007, Champeau 2015) The strongest impact of policing cultures seems to be in establishing practices for maintaining the outward appearance of unity, even when individual members of policing organizations may share few or none of the dominant perspectives of the respective subculture or when the relevant cultural networks are better defined by their conflict and disorganization than by unity. (Reuss-Ianni 1983, Cancino and Enriquez 2004, Behr 2006, 2018, Conti 2009)

2.8.1 Culture and Institution

Organizational factors have also consistently been cited as determinants of police decision-making, especially in relation to community values or concerns and the nature of police culture. (Wilson 1968) Significant differences in arrest rates and how officers treat certain types of encounters have been found between policing organizations, particularly when comparing urban to rural districts. (Crank 1990) The distinction between *institution* and *organization* is particularly relevant here, with institution referring to a broader conceptualization of what policing is that is then enforced through the structure of the specific relevant organization, which is interprets and applies an institutional framework but is also more directly responsible to more concrete structural agents, i.e. political agencies and (if indirectly) community. (cf. Crank 1990, see also Meyer and Rowan 1977) Essentially this means that police organizations will face constraints on their actions and pressures to act both from local sociopolitical factors and actors, e.g. a mayor or city council who view car accidents as a serious problem which the police need to deal with, but that the settings, issues, and concepts involved, as well as the range of actions and solutions which would even be considered possible, will be set by the institutional background of policing. Crime, certain types of dangers and risks (car accidents, drug use) and certain types of 'deviant' public behaviors will be considered legitimate issues for the police to deal with, while others (e.g. pollution as a health risk, plagiarism by university students, cutting in line in the supermarket) are likely to either not even come into consideration as a case for the police or to have their assignment as a task resisted by the police (by the overall organization or by individual figures, be it the chief of police or a patrol officer asked to perform a "waste of time" task.) The organization here interprets and reconciles its own view of the idealized institution—for example, it would be rare to find a police department which didn't consider crime a major focus of police work both in official statements and in officers' private statements, even in areas utterly lacking in recorded crime—with the specific local concerns, with significant variance in how responsive departments might be to outside actors. (cf. Wilson 1968, Crank and Langworthy 1996) In doing so departments establish standards and policies which mirror broader institutional concerns, but in practice function more as statements of values and evidence of professionalism: it remains generally agreed upon that the bureaucratic products of the organizational interpretation of institutional concerns are not the major driver of practical on-the-street police work. (Van Maanen 1974, Manning 1977, Meyer and Rowan 1977, Waddington 1993, De Lint 1999, Willis and Mastrofski 2011)

If the police do not make their decisions based solely on rules, regulations, and the criminal law, then upon what basis do they decide what actions to take and when? Avoiding overly deterministic answers that ignore human agency or the fact that police encounters function as *processes,* the most relevant sources of police norms are still often considered to be institutional: the habitus of policing establishes a basis of knowledge that guide not just in decision-making but in establishing general goals. (Chan 2004) This refers both to the more formal bureaucratic and political structures that can directly apply pressure or impart rewards, but also to the more informal cultural understanding of police and the police identity or self-image shared by officers and celebrated, challenged, poked fun at, and imitated in various ways in a variety of contexts. Police culture is one of the most significant topics within studies of policing as it has often been cited as a hindrance to reform (Niederhoffer 1967, Westley 1970, Skolnick 1971, Crank 1998, Cancino and Enriquez 2004, Loftus 2009a, Reiner 2010), yet it is also increasingly recognized as reflexive, flexible, and more varied internally than it is presented externally or seen in mass media. (Waddington 1999, Paoline 2003, Manning 2012, Marks et al. 2016, see also Goldsmith 1990) Fielding (1994), while critical of the more 'hegemonic' masculine culture most commonly associated with policing (in this case in the UK but not entirely dissimilar from that identified in the US, Germany, or many other jurisdictions) emphasizes that this culture is not universal, maintains many inherent contradictions that only come into conflict in circumstances in which parts of that culture are challenged or relied upon, and that a great deal of police culture is relegated to symbolism and performances in break rooms and canteens; hence, "canteen culture." What police culture primarily seems to offer is a set of narratives, symbols, and perspectives—and more recently sociological efforts have gone toward interpreting these in order to better understand the police culture not just as a problem to be overcome but *as a culture* which relates to, explains, and aligns (but does not immediately determine) what police do in society. (cf. Shearing and Ericson 1991, Fletcher 1996, Ford 2003, Cockcroft 2005, Campeau 2015, Kurtz and Upton 2017, 2019, see also Fine 1984a, Burke 1989)

2.8.2 Two Perspectives on Police Culture

Two contrasting perspectives on the occupational culture of policing both reiterate a similar idea: that how police talk about their work and express their self-image of policing is generally inconsistent with the formalized, bureaucratic idea of policing maintained at the institutional level (and which serves as the

basis for legitimizing what police do.) The first perspective has viewed policing culture as monolithic, as masculine and conflict-oriented, and as expressing a series of values which effectively undermine the concept of the criminal justice 'system,' in which 'real police work' is rare and the best adaption is for officers to adapt a 'cover your ass' approach to avoid the hostile gaze of supervisors and outsiders. (Skolnick 1971, 1985, Niederhoffer 1969, Westley 1970, Rubinstein 1973, Van Maanen 1974, Behr 2000, 2017, Cancino and Enriquez 2004, Reiner 2010, Cockcroft 2013) This view could be described as emphasizing the *structure* of policing culture, from which norms and values are expressed and models for policing behavior are provided. This perspective has tended to present the (typically singular) police culture as a hindrance to reform, and as this disparity between how police view (and do) their work and how it is expected to be done (as well as presented) as the central problem of policing requiring both conceptual change as well as structural change to reconcile these differences. (Sparrow 2016, cf. Kreissl 2008) This view of policing culture has been mirrored to a great extent in popular culture, particularly since the 1960 s and 1970 s, in which increasing political and cultural differences within the US and Western Europe and the injection of crime into the realm of politics primarily through the Nixon and Reagan administrations was reflected by an increasingly 'modern conservative' policing culture. (Reiner and O'Connor 2015, Bielejewski 2016, cf. Manning 2012)

The second perspective emphasizes the variety of policing *cultures*, and their dependency on local and organizational factors in determining how culture is acted out. While both perspectives have been at least to some degree inspired by interactionist approaches, this perspective has focused on the process of *doing* culture rather than on viewing culture as a fixed structure. The variety of policing cultures has been identified both through the variety of policing practices, dependent on locality, context, and broader cultural background (Bittner 1967, Wilson 1968, Reiss 1971, Muir 1979, Punch 1979, Cockcroft 2005, Loftus 2009a/b, Campeau 2015) Without necessarily challenging the idea of a 'dominant' policing culture, some have instead identified a variety of sub-cultures which co-exist or even overlap, suggesting that the dominant and most visible culture may be specifically related to routine patrol work and the lower levels of the police hierarchy. (Reuss-Ianni 1983, Fielding 1994, Behr 2000, Mensching 2007, van Hulst 2013, Hendriks and van Hulst 2015) Both perspectives, however, still suggest that policing cultures are both slow and resistant to change, arguably as a result of the type of work (Loftus 2009a/b) as well as to the existence of strong traditions of continuity and stable images and vocabularies, making it essentially easier for police to tell the same stories. (cf. Crank 1998, see also Burke 1989)

2.8.3 Narratives in Police Culture

Stories are central to understanding police culture, though what they mean for police culture—apart from the question of what police culture actually is—is a question with many conflicting answers. A significant amount of otherwise excellent research into the cultural background and institutional setting of policing was challenged by Waddington's (1999) argument that, essentially, what police say is not the same as what they do, and that the connection between the two is likely more complex than most of the deterministic views of policing culture which continue to guide policy. Shearing and Ericson (1991) have suggested viewing police culture as "a story book," which "would mean examining police stories as stories, police myths as myths and police anecdote as anecdotes, that is, as figurative forms with their own logic." (489) Though rarely considered on its own, there is a significant literature on the forms, varieties, and functions of policing narrative, ranging from the use of justifications and providing accounts in cases of violence or misconduct (Van Maanen 1980, Hunt 1985, Hunter 1999) to the use of 'war stories' to enlighten or entertain other officers (Van Maanen 1974, Reuss-Ianni 1984, Fletcher 1996, Ford 2003, Kurtz and Upton 2017) to the use of narrative practices and rhetoric to define situations and establish authority. (Muir 1980, Meehan 1992, Kidwell 2006, Peterson 2008, Mangold 2011)

Police narratives can be analyzed from at least four analytically useful perspectives: *dramaturgically*, that is, as a performance intended to maintain common ground or group cohesion or to increase the status of the performer; *functionally*, as a coping mechanism or form of boundary maintenance; *culturally*, that is, expressing and exploring values and establishing an identity, whether shared or individually, and *instructively or practically*, that is, as a method of transmitting knowledge and experience that can directly applied as a detached system of knowledge by the audience or recipient. These first three forms overlap significantly when the focus remains on the interaction and the background of the storytelling—whether or not the teller truly believes the story is of at most secondary-relevance, though the practical use of stories for sharing knowledge suggests that the usefulness of the story can often play a role that rivals the performative nature. Functional narratives are essentially reducible to specific dramaturgic forms and forums: where can police talk 'as police' and express concerns and frustrations that would be differently (and most likely negatively) interpreted by a 'mainstream' audience? To the extent that functional stories have been continuously attributed to dominant or even ideal typical policing cultures (Chan 1997, 2004), as well as to the 'default' war stories of the canteen culture (Waddington 1999, van Hulst 2014) they are hermeneutically difficult to separate

into *form* or *function*, but rather—for the purposes of this study—of relevance for the dramaturgical aspects: how do police talk about stress, violence, failure, success, the community, and citizens, embedded within which types of stories?

The dramaturgical and cultural perspectives as defined here differ primarily in their disciplinary backgrounds—the dramaturgical emphasizes the use of rhetoric and the forms of expression, while the cultural puts more stock in the use of moral statements and the establishment of 'normal' behaviors through speech acts and the use of 'common sense' as an underpinning of truth. (Geertz 1975) Both perspectives speak—though in different ways—to the establishment of an identity, as well as to the ascription of identity and motives to others. Kenneth Burke (1969) describes the creation, through rhetoric, of "consubstantialities" (21) between elements—the establishment of common ground by linking concepts, ideas, symbols, and identities together. Rhetoric has the strategic and political ability "to bestow or to deny value, to create allegiances, to promise, to form alliances to exclude and to include" (Glaeser 2000: 48) which is primarily indicated, according to Burke, by the establishing of sameness or differentness, by creating or severing connections between things, people, places, and events. As policing—as a Weberian institution—works through classification and the application of predefined types, police officers bear a great deal of power simply through their ability to define things as of a type, whether 'criminals,' 'good citizens,' 'suspicious activity' or 'unacceptable risk.' (cf. Feest and Blankenburg 1972) Police have a *symbolic power*, "a power of constituting the given through utterances, of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world and, thereby, action on the world and thus the world itself, an almost magical power which enables on to obtain the equivalent of what is obtained through force (whether physical or economic), by virtue of the specific effort of mobilization." (Bourdieu 1991: 170, also cited in Loader 1997, see also Austin 1965, Walker 1996)

Defining at the abstract is easy, but the potential for narrative (as well as role) conflict emerges when police come close to the subjects of definition; 'symbolic assailants' (Skolnick 1971) or a hostile community are easy to slip into narratives as background or explanations for the irrational acts of undefined quality-less characters, but become may not always work as well when applied to a more defined personality, to an individual known to the police to even be minimally capable of change or as someone who can be reasoned with. If police define themselves as part of a working community actively engaged in modeling everyday social norms (as community police generally and Broken Windows specifically suggest), then officers may need to either develop more complex narrative explanations of why some individuals became the target of police intervention or else

set strict boundaries for how a 'mainstream' member of a community can become an outsider. (cf. Becker 1963) Of course, at the institutional level police hold no responsibility to provide accounts, and from an institutional perspective there are no 'insiders' and 'outsiders' apart from those authorized to enforce laws and regulations and those who are solely on the receiving end, but the concept of policing culture is at its core centered on the idea that police require some sort of identity to give meaning to the work they do, giving shareable (if not necessarily shared) meaning to ideas ranging from the community, problems—including individuals and types of individuals considered to be problematic—and the institution and organization of the police itself.

One of the most ubiquitous examples is the basic commonality of policing, in which police officers across districts, states, and even national borders tend to, at least at a symbolic level, identity and empathize with one another. At the same time, opponents of the police in particular frame the police this way (witnessed by the common and transnational use of the graffitied slogan "ACAB"—"all cops are bastards.") Somewhat surprisingly, the consubstantiality of policing was downplayed in the observation of and discussions with community-oriented policing officers, with a great deal of narratives separating individual or organizational experiences and ideals from the ideal typical images of US policing as well as from 'big city' policing in general. While it is less surprising that officers portray themselves as decision-making individuals who learn from their experience rather than bureaucratic automatons who make decisions by rote, the variety of individualized narratives and contextualization of the police, individually and as an agency, within a community both challenged dominant constructions of a policing culture and worldview but also supported some theorized prerequisites for fulfilling social control roles, such as the need to be able to (narratively) differentiate between predictable and unpredictable behaviors and risks, and the reconciliation of situational decision-making and personal knowledge with institutional demands and regulations.

For the most part, the dramaturgical and cultural perspectives will be considered together, with attention paid to the risk of conflating the way in stories are told with what those stories mean. A necessary—though not always as obvious as would be suggested—distinction is between *instrumental narratives*, i.e. those used within police work in front of an audience of non-police to ascribe roles or establish a form of control, and *demonstrative narratives*, which are superficially told 'for the sake of being told,' encompassing a great deal of 'canteen talk' (allowing for the presumed functional role of that talk in establishing group solidarity, common images, etc.) but especially narratives that were presented to me

as a field researcher either unprovoked or in response to questioning. (Overt) dramaturgical narratives often took place in common settings, with mixed audiences or within larger interactions, and their role *as action* was plausibly interpretable—for example, the contrast between police speaking of facts of an ongoing case abstractly ("the victim," "the offender") or including personal details and thereby creating a less two-dimensional image of the person as social actor often indicated a shift in the authoritative presentation of the officer, a way of speaking as a person moderately constrained by a role and its demand and expectations, rather than speaking directly from that role.

These demonstrative narratives are not simply face-value statements of beliefs or values but are rather being communicated (at best) between varying institutional frames with corresponding expectations (and at worst simply reflect a ritual recitation of 'high level' policing institutional values.) Of course police officers speaking to a field researcher have an interest in presenting themselves in their best light—although a great deal of recounted stories were also of failures, of mistakes, of learning, and sometimes of regrets—but even allowing for the same rhetorical wiggle room that the dramaturgical approach allows for most personal interactions, the examination of how police present themselves as 'good' is enlightening as a demonstration of differing interpretable sets of values: how could police officers best present themselves and their work as effective in front of different audiences ranging from fellow officers, administration and supervisors, local government officials, private citizens with varying formal and informal organizational affiliations such as hunters, volunteer firefighters, community festival organizers and volunteers, and bar regulars, as well as private citizens in random encounters, possibly even involving criminal complaints, and finally a field researcher from the US with significantly more experience with and knowledge of American police than their (East) German counterparts?

A common misstep in research into policing—particularly under the guise of criminology or criminal justice studies—has been to search for universals and regard the culture and worldview of policing as monolithic and unchanging. (Ford 2003) The examples cited and countless others are evidence of the diversity of policing practices and of a diversity of policing *cultures*, particularly when comparing police work, agencies, and officers across cultural or national borders. This is especially true when culture is considered not to be simply the stories told in certain cultural forums, but also the range of factors that aid police in making sense of their social environment and which practices should be implemented when and where. Policing takes places within spaces and communities, and even policing myths, classics, and legends need to be believably connected in some rhetorical way to the 'true' experiences of the audience. The question remains

of what to do with this evidence of diverse practices: what can the stories that police tell *tell us* outside of the context in which they are told?

2.8.4 Stories and Local Knowledge

Practical narratives of policing transmit knowledge and experience but even these basic concepts can take very different forms: which elements are unique and which can be generalized or presumed? Which forms of knowledge provide a step-by-step guide for action or a checklist for idealized procedure, and which constitute a toolkit or tactical advice that can be selectively interpreted and applied by an officer who has the skills and experience to use it effectively? The divide between 'craft' and 'profession,' (however framed) essentially focuses on the differences in sources of knowledge for both conducting effective police work and how (i.e. on what basis) police work should be conducted. (Bayley and Bittner 1984) Using police culture as a source of police knowledge often overlooks the 'mechanisms of action' for how social problems, root causes, or local factors translate into specific incidents: stated policing values might be influential in defining certain generalized outcomes for certain generalized encounters as desirable, but it is important to identify in which ways policing (or other) cultural frameworks provide narratives for identifying ideal type actors linked to actions and contexts. Understandings—stories—of issues or problems, without changing the facts of the case, portray a "troublesome person" or a "troubled person" evoking different connections and solutions. (Gusfield 1989: 434) The basis for police interventions might be based primarily on legal considerations and crime as a social context, but if police officers identify the situation they are responding to, a 'disorderly person' in public harassing passersby, as one immediately linked to a 'deeper' social narrative, i.e. identifying the individual as someone with a known history of alcohol and/or mental problems, they might alter their interpretation of what an 'ideal' outcome is and not be content to simply resolve the incident by removing the irritation, i.e. forcibly removing the individual. In the same way, a great deal of public behavior which becomes the target of police intervention can be viewed as problematic because of the behavior—drug use is often framed this way with explanations ranging from addiction and the need for better treatment to individual or cultural moral failings—or as problematic primarily because it is public, in which case simply displacing that behavior to a less visible solution is not only institutionally acceptable due to the reduction in future complaints and public perceptions of 'disorder' (cf. Meehan 1992) but may also be personally, morally, considered a better alternative to the individual

officer than a more punitive, even self-defeating, option such as arrest or a fine. 'Exculpatory' narratives were common in the case at hand, and the thinner wall between police—at least in terms of individual officers—and the community in which they serve could be considered as a significant factor here, though this is not necessarily always the case in small town or rural areas. (cf. Girtler 1980, Regoli and Poole 1980, Behr 1993, Weisheit et al. 1994, Young 1993, Pelfrey 2007) Falcone et al. (2002) describe 'small-town' police philosophy as following the idea that "deviance of any sort is seen first as a community problem to be addressed in the least invasive way, thus avoiding collateral damage the community." (381) This raises the questions of how certain issues and actions are defined as community problems, which interventions are seen as less intrusive, and how the community itself is constructed and involved. (cf. Wooff 2015)

More general institutional frameworks outside of policing have laid claim to a great realm of social problems which often overlap with policing, meaning that a plethora of referral agencies can be involved in situations which the police interpret—or are forced to interpret—as falling within a more specialized realm. (Gusfield 1989, see also Sennett 1977) This 'civilizing' process of attributing responsibility to more and more identifiable problems (cf. Elias 1988) has been discussed with regard to policing, especially in terms of mental health and drug use (Bittner 1967b, Green 1997, Cooper et al. 2005, Sellers et al. 2005), but this formal distinction between police responsibility and the responsibility of other social agencies problematizes personal control or agency. Without viewing this as necessary a more desirable or more effective outcome, a third possibility—more common in a small town or rural setting—would be to handle the problem, or transfer responsibility for handling the problem, to networks of personal relationships, i.e. family or close friends. (Christie 1977, 2004) Other cases might simply involve police avoiding getting involved in problems which they don't see as related to 'real police work;' Bittner (1967b: 279) refers, for example, to the avoidance of the emergency apprehension of individuals with reported mental illness as "doctrinal," in that it was normal and expected but lacked explicit formulation and was simply seen as something outside the confines of policing. These variations in policing practices might be related to factors including (sub)cultural values, the self-image of the police and police officer, or everyday concerns or routines (e.g. responding to 'mentally disturbed individual' cases often require additional steps and paperwork that might result in unwanted overtime.) In some cases, though, they might also fall in line with local values or community expectations as well: the reticence of police to formally involve themselves into situations may also reflect an attempt to allow some problems

to remain undiagnosed private issues. (cf. Sennett 1977) On the ownership of problems Gusfield (1989) writes that:

> To "own" a problem is to be obligated to claim recognition of a problem and to have information and ideas about it given a high degree of attention and credibility, to the exclusion of others. To "own" a social problem is to possess the authority to name that condition a "problem" and to suggest what might be done about it. It is the power to influence the marshalling of public facilities – laws, enforcement abilities, opinion, goods and service – to help resolve the problem. To disown a problem is to claim that one has no such responsibility. (433)

Owning or disowning problems does not simply affect whether police need to deal with a specific issue or incident, but can also refer to whether they approach that problem from an institutional perspective—as something beyond a doubt of police concern, such as a serious assault—or as a community concern that *could* be dealt with by the police but alternatively by a variety of agencies, groups, or individuals.

Local knowledge is often stressed as a necessary element in both effectively policing neighborhoods or regions as well as in being aware of community concerns, tolerances, and prevailing norms. This is especially true within more recent community policing programs and the "Broken Windows" model. (Kelling and Coles 1996, Kelling 1999) Yet the concept of having 'local knowledge' is more often treated in a 'common sense' manner, in academic theory as well as in practical police work. (cf. McNulty 1994, see also Geertz 1975) From an interactionist perspective, it is insufficient to simply say that police have *better* knowledge of a place, its inhabitants, and local customs, mores, expectations, and values simply by virtue of spending time there on the job. (cf. Mawby 1991) Too much has already been explored in terms of the institutional backgrounds and competing sources of legitimacy and knowledge of the police to simply assume that knowledge can objectively be constructed and then linearly implemented into processes of police work: a better sociological understanding is necessary of how this knowledge is constructed, communicated, and implicated, and a great deal of these efforts seem to take place in the broad arena of police culture, through shared stories, 'backstage presentations,' parables, myths, anecdotes, and jokes, as well as official accounts, records and (more recently) social media. (Reuss-Ianni 1984, Crank 1994, 1998, Ford 2003, Chan 2004, Conti 2009, Goldsmith 2015)

Narratives used by police—whether more formally as part of 'official knowledge,' e.g. through training, or informally and privately—can be used to provide specific knowledge in the form of connections, associations, or expectations that

may be useful in various ways to police officers on the job; this can include information about specific individuals and past criminal histories, relations between individuals and groups, attributions of individuals or groups (e.g. describing someone, or a specific identified group, as "violence-prone,") expectations of what types of behaviors will or won't be generally considered deviant in certain areas (and at which times and by which individuals, etc.) and how the intervention or presence of the police will be viewed and reacted to in certain neighborhoods and contexts. Alternatively, policing narratives can establish *general rules* for how things work or should work, making this type of knowledge universally implementable rather than only relevant to specific cases and contexts: this type of knowledge can often be found in practices such as attempting to determine when someone is lying or 'acting suspicious,' or in blanket statements such as, "shoplifters never carry weapons." The overlap between these two types of lessons is not always clear, as a story of one specific incident can easily be generalized to refer to common patterns, but is relevant in that each appeals more to a different idea of how policing works: do police apply universal ideals, rules, and standards to a chaotic and fragmented cluster of societal and cultural realms, or do they adapt their understandings of what is normal and acceptable to the local community which they serve?[10]

Criticisms of the police often stem from the fact that the 'universal knowledge' generated and disseminated from police occupational cultures has often been found to have a strong middle-class bias. (cf. Wilson 1968) Complaints by 'upstanding' citizens are often taken more seriously—at least in terms of rhetoric and appearances—which easily lends itself to the appearance of bias (Marat 2019): the defense of this promoted by Wilson and Kelling (1982), and

[10] Waegel, (1981) for example, has found that detectives in the agency under study interpreted cases primarily "using conceptions of 1) how identifiable perpetrators seem to be; 2) the normal social characteristics of the victims; and 3) the settings involved, and behavior seen as typical in such settings." (270) Cases are judged based on how well the specific elements and interpersonal relations of the case fit to expectations of routine or typical cases; those cases which are deemed to not fit into this model and which would necessitate a better understanding of the context are generally 'back-burnered' and given lower priority. An association between presumed social norms of the relevant community and not just the difficulty of resolving the case is suggested: "Conceptions of the normal social characteristics of victims are also central to case routinization. Victims having different social characteristics are regarded as being more or less likely to desire or follow through with prosecution in the case, to be reliable sources of information about it, and to inquire as to the outcome of the investigation." (271) Sudnow (1965) has made similar observations about how 'normal' crimes and criminals are constructed by public defenders. See also Reichertz (1990) for a discussion of the role of typologies and assumptions based on the context of German detectives.

generally within many community policing initiatives, has been that *actual* community values tend to favor public order and the enforcement of the types of social norms that would often be described as “middle-class.” (see also Vollmer 1971, cf. Harcourt 2001)

2.9 Showing up and Saying the Lines: Dramaturgy and Liminality

The present study is an exploration of both the general concept of policing—as a practice of social control and as a socially embedded institution—as well as a situated instance of the performance of associated roles. The primary question raised both in regards to the question of negotiating authority as well as to the connection between community or society as a form of (structural) identity and the legitimization of (the process of) policing is essentially: who are the police? This question, though the answer will vary depending where one looks, cannot be answered purely based on rational theory or teleological conceptions of what the police *should be*, but instead requires an active participation in the meaning making that itself constitutes police work: the researcher must engage in participant-observation. (Herbert 1996, cf. Marks 2004, Wooff 2015) The roles that police officers take on are, regardless of theorizing or institutional demands and regulations, never fixed, if only for the fact that those who encounter police will have different, and conflicting, understandings and expectations of those roles. Secondly, those roles are not the entirety of what a ‘police officer’ is, as it must be considered that a role is purely a construct, essentially a metaphor. (cf. Burke 1989) Real people take on those roles and mold their actions and understands in consideration of the same, but do not shed the remainder of their identity. Policing reforms have tended to downplay this and separate the individual from the role, often by attempting to separate the individual outside the job from the officer on the job by repeatedly (and inconsistently) alternating the centralization and decentralization of police organization (Crank and Langworthy 1996, Smith and Somerville 2013), discouraging officers from living in the communities they police, exploiting cultural pressures for police officers to limit their social circles to other officers or ‘pro-police’ groups, and rarely taking strong institutional positions with regard to the established fact that officers wield a great deal of discretionary or decision-making power in their everyday work. (cf. Sparrow 2016)

While research on policing has tended to overrepresent metropolitan and inner-city police work (Klofas 2000), the extant literature on rural and small-town

policing has painted a distinct enough picture that some authors have considered it essentially an entirely different beast, both in the nature of the work but especially in how that work is expressed through a defining occupational culture. (Young 1993, Falcone et al. 2002, Wooff 2015, Yarwood 2016) The interactional processes—the appeals to authority, the demands for acceptable narrative accounting and the performance of aligning actions, etc.—that characterize policing may be fundamentally the same, but rural policing substantially alters the situated background and context of those interactions to both allow different forms of interactions and restrict conventional forms of police action by imparting them with new layers of meaning, e.g. forcibly removing or even arresting someone from a public setting may more effectively label that person as undesirable or deviant, particularly if that person is already personally known to the intervening officer. Urban police, in contrast, can more often rely on bureaucratic anonymity and institutional blindness in only carrying out their job and avoiding questions of effective longer-term outcomes. This is relevant as contemporary frameworks of policing, specifically community-oriented policing, have tended to either emphasize or simply take for granted the connections between 'community values' and what police do without adequately explaining how these connections are established or maintained. (Waldeck 1999, Harcourt 2001, Wooden and Rogers 2014) The theories of community-policing have tried to make police officers more responsive to the local community but without sacrificing or loosening the institutional pressures which have historically been considered to be the major driver of police activity. (Reiss 1971, Van Maanen 1974, cf. Moskos 2008a, Parnaby and Leyden 2011) At the same time, the ideals of community policing are not dissimilar to the noted realities of rural policing in many ways: exploring the dynamics of policing encounters in rural areas and small towns can demonstrate alternative plausibilities for policing, though not necessary indicate these as possible, effective, or desirable when shorn of their context.

Examining community police officers in Brandenburg reiterated the dramaturgical nature of police—the extent to which policing is not only symbolic but image-based, performative, and centered around the taking on (and subversion) of a variety of roles, masks and costumes, and constitutes routine, ritual, and spontaneous interactions which are interpretable at superficial as well as deeper levels, reflecting the tensions between or synthesis of institutional bureaucratic demands and the consubstantiality of social space, social life, and social norms. The institutional model of policing is only effectively capable of recognizing formal documented acts—actions such as giving a warning, going to a friend or family member rather than confronting someone directly, conveniently looking away so as not to see possibly illegal behavior, or attempting to talk someone out

of filing a formal complaint clearly serve a social function and have meaning for the involved individuals which cannot be effectively conveyed with "no action taken," (cf. Manning 2003) and yet these type of situational interventions require some form of already-existing commonality between police and community in terms of values, norms, relationships and resources including social capital.

Police were observed to take on a liminal meta-role. Liminality refers to a state of transition, traditionally in the context of rites of passage (Turner 1967) but also in the sense of identity which is permanently between states, in which different 'polar roles' may be called into existent but may just as easily be pushed aside. The Revierpolizei in Falkenmark were found to exemplify this. Community officers were viewed as liminal because 1) officers lived where they worked and worked where they lived, 2) officers regularly had encounters with individuals who they knew in the context of a non-police role (friends, family, neighbors), 3) these relationships often served to strip the meaning from a formal institutional police role and require adaptions and alter the dramaturgical performance (such as by demanding a more overt transparency and different assumptions of what being 'neutral' means within a dispute), and 4) the perception of many police-issues from the broader perspective of the community which lead to many obvious efforts by police to avoid dealing with situations *purely* in police terms. Essentially this means that police officers were (almost) always responsive to other social roles in their performative actions, ranging from simple everyday gestures such as waving to passing motorists to the issuing of criminal sanctions or making arrests. There was an awareness among officers that maintaining a good relationship with the community requires being part of that community, which in turn requires actively playing the part of a community member, even in uniform. This also affected the apparent self-identity of officers, reflected in how they discussed problems in their community and their expectations of what is good (or bad) police work: while the police played a significant role in identifying and preventing risk, they were not the sole owners of the problems they identified.

This dissertation will explore the nature of police work within this context, emphasizing both universal or general aspects of policing as well as contextual or factors. The way that police officers construct their community is a function of what role police *can* play within it—the ideals of community policing have emphasized the positives of community embeddedness but downplayed the constraining nature this might have. This work is in no way an evaluation and is not intended to highlight flaws or successes of the specific organization but rather to understand the way police work is performed there. The parallels drawn between this case and others are, however, intended to show the relative fit

between the observed realities and the ideals of theoretical community policing. The issues explored will highlight how policing a community from within, as it were, requires more than superficial changes, and arguably is not possible in most communities or jurisdictions barring substantial changes in realms ranging from the legal to the cultural. This work, while searching for universal rules and theoretical insight about policing, is a critique of the application of universal rules to the everyday practices of policing which attempt to separate the most human elements out of practices which affect the lives of communities.

The following chapter will present the participant-observation methodology used, as well as further describing the key elements of the setting, geographically and socially, and explore how the use of ethnographic methods has been crucial in developing a sociological approach to, and understanding of, police work. The use of ethnographic methods in police work in particular has almost always emphasized unique and local factors within interactions and broader settings as meaningful, but the more positivistic nature of 'applied research' within criminology and police science has arguably led to a situation where key findings have been cherry-picked and shorn of their context. (Manning 2001, 2012, 2013, Marks 2004) This risk is compounded in the various calls for the use of comparative research, and the fewer actual examples of comparative international policing research, which tends to treat policing within nation-states as homogenous, slow to experience change, and inevitable products of historical conditions. (Das 1994, cf. Reiner and Newburn 2000) The emphasis in this work remains on the sociology of policing in context, rather than an attempt to establish best practices or a systematic database of knowledge intended for police administrators. (cf. Jenkins and DeCarlo 2015)

Chapter Three examines police-citizen encounters and presents a theoretical framework based on the dramaturgic presentation of different sources of authority. This framework is intended to be universally applicable to police encounters but primarily relevant for the types of small town and rural settings where liminality characterizes the police role—those places where police officers cannot be anonymous or interchangeable but must instead manage their own personal identity. In such settings police learn that they cannot simply move from incident to incident but must instead consider the future of encounters and, in essence, question the entire purpose of police intervention—what is being enforced and what purpose is being served? The institutional role brings with it assumptions in the minds of individuals (including officers) which can often—purely by the visible presence of an officer—serve the purposes of order-maintenance or peacekeeping without the need for a deeper understanding of the causes of the disturbance or behavior. At the same time, this assumes a mutual intelligible understanding of

what type of behavior is being enforced which requires no additional communication. Officers strategically rely on the appearance of institutional authority—most obviously in situations where they feel they have no local support, such as in an 'outsider' neighborhood and generally in situations where they find it preferable to not get more intimately involved. In other situations, officers negotiate not only about the guiding definition of the situation but about the officer's role itself, and at the same time reflect their understanding of the role of police in the community and the relevance of the community to policing.

Chapter Four explores the issue of violence, particularly its use as a symbol—of policing itself, of danger, and of authority. Violence is central to understandings of its police; it is exceedingly rare in the study area and yet still significant to police culture and identity. The weapons which officers carry serve as symbols which represent violence as they indicate their own potential use, and managing the presentation of these symbols allows police to indicate or downplay their own capacity to use force as a control strategy. How police discussed violence was a significant avenue for exploring how the police viewed their community and the nature of their work as (among other roles) problem-solvers. Violence was also symbolic in its use in instrumental narratives, to teach lessons or define situations in a way which would frame the outcome. Personal experiences of violence among officers were also rare but significant in how they were given meaning and valued as 'experience,' particularly in how they forced officers to reconcile generally positive images of their community with more typical police assumptions of a dangerous and unpredictable public.

Chapter Five follows up by exploring the use of narratives within policing in various aspects. While narrative criminology is a rapidly expanding field, in terms of police work only a handful of explorations have critically approached the use of rhetoric, metaphor, and language in general in terms of everyday police work. Narrative, as well as cultural image, frames expectations of what police can and will do from various perspectives (including the police themselves,) and conforming to or subverting these expectations is a significant component of interactional police image work. Storytelling has long been considered important in terms of occupational cultures (Hughes 1958) and the police are no exception; at the same time, it is important to not conflate what police say backstage with what they do on-stage. With this consideration, the narratives of policing are explored in terms of their performative nature—as reflections of cultural values—as well as their use as sources of knowledge and education intended to be practical: the latter is particularly relevant if police are intended to understand their community and interpret and internalize its values in a way that can justify the use of the term "community policing."

The final chapter attempts to synthesize these elements of policing, following the arc from individual officers and interactions in Chapter Three to the relevance of shared symbolism and cultural framing in Chapters Four and Five to then explore how the community itself is constructed, maintained, and given legitimacy through various forms of police work. Re-incorporating the idea of liminality, this chapter will analyze the use of community partnerships and symbolic practices of policing which allow the organization to uphold institutional realities while officers remain significant dependent on their ability to subvert those realities and make the police identity their own.

The present study examines the contradictions of policing in a setting that itself could be considered full of contradictions: many of the police officers began their careers in socialist East Germany, with a police force bearing an almost antithetical mandate to that of today, and yet themselves do not see their work, goals, or strategies as fundamentally different. The fact that they appear to be correct does not speak so much to the universal nature of policing a populace as it does to the nature of how policing can, in the right setting, with the right people, at the right time, be integrated into a local community; there is no technocratic magic to this, but simply the continuing, knowing, and often unremarked upon managing of who the police are, and who those police officers are, in a way that lets the community say "they are ours" and the police say "we are them."

3 Setting the Stage: Setting, Method, and Perspective

3.1 Ride-Alongs: Accompanying People and Accompanying Roles

The present study is based on fieldwork accompanying on-duty (and occasionally off-duty) police officers in the pseudonymous county of Falkenmark in the German state of Brandenburg in 2014 and 2015. The primary focus was on the officers of the Revierpolizei, but observations were also made with additional units and unstructured interviews were conducted with a variety of officers and administrators.

As a planned ethnographic study, the purpose of the research was not to solve a specific identified problem, but rather more generally to answer the question "what do police do?" in this specific context and explore the function and role of the police within the context of community and society. This serves the broader purpose of better understanding "the police" as an element of social structure, as a cultural factor, and in term of practical everyday behavior and interaction: understanding what is broadly common to policing and what is unique to specific organizations, contexts, and circumstances. The original assumptions of the research as proposed emphasized both the characteristics of the broader region—a rural area generally considered 'less developed' than many parts of Germany—as well as the relevant history—Brandenburg is a 'new German state'[1] which

[1] Behr (1993) is critical of this common term, as while the states are 'new' to the Federal Republican of Germany, they also existed historically prior even to the existence of a united German nation; however, he is equally critical of most of the proffered alternatives as well, and uses this term as a more 'neutral' alternative to the more historically-oriented, potentially culturally divisive East and West (terms used liberally by Glaeser [2000] reflecting their use by police officers in Berlin.) Both of those works involved participant-observation and interviews in the years following unification, while the current study took place much later than

A. Bielejewski, *Holding down the Fort*,
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was only (re)united with the Federal Republican of Germany in 1991, involving a transition into new governmental systems, including the police. While both of these are important considerations, what became clear is that understanding policing within society involves a deeper, more critical analysis than simply linking historical or geographical variables to styles of policing. (cf. Wilson 1968, Bittner 1970)

One thing that became clear early in the field research is that *what police do* is not limited to observable actions or decision-making but also incorporates a much broader range of symbolic actions: at the highest level this means what police represent in society even apart from any action being taken, and at the interactional level this means how even minor actions taken by police can reflect not only social structures but how those structure are being negotiated, challenged, and maintained. *What police do* is certainly not simply law enforcement, and not even just problem solving, as police involve themselves in all manners of conflicts, disputes, routines, and private behavior, and simply by doing so they transform these behaviors, juxtaposing them with an institutional framework that emphasizes order-maintenance and often uses vocabularies of consensus without needing to rely on actual consensus. The institutional role of the police within society and public life is a still-relevant, though often examined, sociological relationship.

Accompanying officers from the Revierpolizei added a crucial additional level to this examination of the role of the police. While the institution of the police has been found to operate bureaucratically and emphasize ideal type models and measurable outcomes, the Revierpolizei has a general mandate more in line with a community policing orientation. Though considered a specific unit within the broader policing organization, they play a dominant role in the region and are often the primary point of contact for a variety of situations and cases, including both criminal and non-criminal matters, meaning that this community-orientation can (in theory) play a more significant role in police-community relations and interactions than the formal structure, messaging or image work of the bureaucratic organization might indicate. The primary relevance lies here in how community-oriented policing—itself owing a great deal towards ethnographic field and the observation of police officers *in situ*—emphasizes both individual interactions and dealing with individualized situations as well as maintaining a more abstract 'good relationship' with the community both through the

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those investigations, and as a result re-tellings of political history tended to be more often set in the narrative past, rather than the descriptions of 'ongoing events' presented by Behr and Glaeser.

aggregation of individual encounters handled using this perspective and framework as well as through image work and establishing specific formal as well as ad hoc partnerships with community organizations. (Wilson and Kelling 1982, Pate and Skogan 1985, Ericson et al. 1993, Kelling and Coles 1996, Kelling 1999 Feltes 2014, cf. Manning 2001, Sampson and Raudenbush 2004, Mastrofski 2019) This means that (at least at a theoretical level) police officers in the Revierpolizei or other community-oriented units are intended to adapt a framework for evaluating 'good work' as well as knowledge or skills for accomplishing that work which stands in contrast to the standard institutional life-world of policing. At the same time, that standard institutional life-world has long been recognized as a useful bureaucratic fiction (cf. Bittner 1974, Manning 1977, Kelling and Coles 1996) which can help police in accomplishing their specific organizational, situational and individual goals but which alone does not set out the only objectives of the organization or individual officers and offers little in terms of guidance or resources for practically dealing with most of the issues police are expected to deal with, i.e. situations only tangentially related to, or completely unrelated to, law enforcement.

The police have a comparatively long history in interpretive sociology—particularly within symbolic interactionism and ethnography—beginning in earnest in the Anglo-American context with the Second Chicago School (Fine 1995) and continuing until recent decades where the topic has been subsumed under the field of 'criminal justice' and predominantly emphasized policy and measurement. (Manning 2005, 2014, Sparrow 2016) This interest in the *processes* of policing—seen also in the frequency with which Erving Goffman uses the police as an example for various types of interactions and face-to-face encounters—reflects the complicated position of the police between an enclosed inward-focused bureaucracy and an active component of a living community. (cf. Wilz 2012) Taking the institutional measures of policing—the data produced though organizational work and the formal measures of activity—at face-value is doubly counterproductive, not only because it risks overlooking the importance of additional factors, elements, structures, and outcomes to which the institutional perspective is blind (Sparrow 2016), but also because the evidence already available makes it clear that police themselves—as an organization and as individual employees—rarely treat the ideals and formal truths of policing as actual everyday truth. (Bittner 1970, 1974, Van Maanen 1974, Behr 2000, Mensching 2007) The creation of bureaucratic reality is a process to be explored and analyzed rather than a starting point for theory-building.

The current study involved the use of participant observation of on-duty police officers throughout their shifts. The goal was to develop an understanding of the

police role within the community, both in terms of unique individual encounters and in terms of reinforcing or maintaining an image of the community. The role of the police is symbolic in nature—not just in terms of functionality, though the symbolic powers of the police are a critical dimension, but in the sense that all social roles are symbolically constituted. Police work is performed by people who take on that role, tailor it to their own expectations, beliefs, and abilities, act it out in different ways, and distance themselves from it in different ways. The goal of the study was therefore not just to examine the roles themselves, but to get to understand the people who performed them and to understand their own relationship to the role, to not just understand a job or action within a context and setting but to understand how interaction creates and gives meaning and importance to the context. Entering the field as an outsider—not just by virtue of not being a police officer, but also by being a foreigner and new to the region—is both a challenge for determining what can be learned and how, but also reveals many new interesting elements of everyday normality that go unremarked or are taken-for-granted by 'locals.' The police were examined from the perspective of symbolic interactionism, which emphasizes the establishment of shared meaning within interactions, and dramaturgy, which presumes some (conscious or unconscious) effort by actors to frame their actions in the best light or in ways that manage their (and others') power, ability, and responsibility within situations. A method and methodology are required to make the backstage visible, or at least acknowledged, in the way it is for the actors themselves, but also to appreciate the numerous background factors that are easily overlooked but are necessary for any roles to be performed. It is not enough to report what the actor did and said on stage if our goal is to understand the person who plays that role.

3.2 Symbolic Action, Narrative and Cultural Understanding

Symbolic interactionism, particularly as formulated and conceived by Herbert Blumer, is more an approach to social research based on theoretical assumptions rather than a theory in its own right. The emphasis is put on communication, the use of symbols, and negotiated meanings rather than inherent or immutable characteristics of individuals or objects. The three basic premises of symbolic interactionism, as laid out by Blumer (1969), are that (1) people act on things—objects or people—based on the meaning they, the actor, ascribe to that thing, (2) that these meanings are not inherent or even necessarily based on any essential

qualities of that thing but rather derived externally from others—whether specific individuals or society in general, and (3) that this generation of meaning takes places through a process of interaction and interpretation. These assumptions mean that some questions asked by researchers in other disciplines with regards to individual's mental state, motives or true beliefs are seen as not only essentially unknowable for symbolic interactionists, but also irrelevant inasmuch as 'internal factors' that are never played out in social action are unobservable and cannot be said to definitively have an impact. As meanings are seen as being constantly under negotiation, the specific meaning of an object or concept held by an individual is only relevant in its ability to explain the actions taken at the point when they are taken. Interest is instead on the use of meaning in establishing 'social worlds', with the recognition that some definitions may become standardized, routinized, or ritualized while others will remain unique, ad hoc, or only tangentially and temporarily shared by parties:

> Usually, most of the situations encountered by people in a given society are defined or "structured" by them [according to the interpretation of the situation.] Through previous interaction they develop and acquire common understandings or definitions of how to act in this or that situation. These common definitions enable people to act alike. The common repetitive behavior of people in such situations should not mislead the student into believing that no process of interpretation is in play; on the contrary, even though fixed, the actions of the participating people are constructed by them through a process of interpretation. Since ready-made and commonly accepted definitions are at hand, little strain is placed on people in guiding and organizing their acts. However, many other situations may not be defined in a single way be the participating people… Interpretations have to be developed and effective accommodation of the participants has to be worked out. (Blumer 1969: 86)

Situations are created as forms of mutual understanding through processes of role-taking and role-offering. Individuals must understand through common, often subtle, processes that they all, in some way, based on the roles they take on themselves and expect others to take, belong to the situation and that any actions they take will be interpreted by the others within the context of that situation. Blumer, following Mead (1934), emphasizes that role-taking, in order to establish an effective shared meaning, must be mutual, that "one can do this only by placing himself in the position of others and viewing himself or acting toward himself from that position." (Blumer 1969: 13) A key focus of symbolic interactionist inquiry is exploring the norms and rules which govern individuals' various understandings of what type of situation they are in, what their role is, what they can and cannot (or should and should not) do, as well as the processes of

how these norms are generated, conveyed, interpreted and challenged. Interactionists emphasize the complexity of social interactions—that the meanings of even generic social roles can vary from individual to individual or even from moment to moment, that the same action can be perceived and interpreted differently, that dynamic processes can lead to drastically different outcomes in how actions and reactions are interpreted, and how attempts to clarify or secure meaning may still lead to conflict or uncertainty—even as they try to understand the processes as flowing from common, understandable attributions of meaning. Chang (2004) states that Blumer "correctly argued that we should not adopt a ritualistic approach to explain interaction, treating it as a mere forum through which the supposed determining effects of preexisting structural and cultural conditions are played out. Rather, we must recognize the formative effect of interaction in its own right." (415) As Blumer states:

> Human group life on the level of symbolic interaction is a vast process in which people are forming, sustaining, and transforming the objects of their world as they come to give meaning to objects. Objects have no fixed status except as their meaning is sustained through indications and definitions that people make of the objects. Nothing is more apparent than that objects in all categories can undergo change in their meaning… The life and action of people necessarily change in line with the changes taking place in their world of objects. (1969: 12)

Communication is interpreted broadly in symbolic interactionism, with early analysis from Mead frequently focusing on the use of non-verbal gestures. Mead (1934) described a triadic nature of meaning in which a gesture—a form of communication viewed by a recipient as intending meaning, regardless of whether or not it is 'correctly' interpreted (cf. Barthes 2004)—can signify what the person to whom the gesture is directed is intended or expected to do, what the person making the gesture plans or is likely to do, and the joint action that has become a possibility through the use of a gesture. (see also Peirce 1991; a significant influence of Peirce's semiotics on Mead has been often proposed, cf. Bakker 2011) Blumer provides the example of a robber commanding a victim (who only takes on the role of a victim over the course of this process) to put up his hands, which is at the same time "(a) an indication of what the victim is to do; (b) an indication of what the robber is to do, that is, relieve the victim of his money; and (c) an indication of the join act being formed, in this case a holdup." (1969: 9) This triadic structure requires a generalized mutual understanding of the purposes of the gestures and the type of joint action or situation being constructed: mutual role-taking.

The use of social roles, following on the work of George Herbert Mead, is seen as essentially offering ways to better categorize and fluidly act within social worlds that would otherwise be complex, chaotic and possibly devoid of any interpretable meaning. Roles themselves vary in complexity, but in a basic sense all roles govern at a minimum whether any expectations are placed upon an individual in a certain context: e.g. a local standing at a bus stop may overhear a conversation and realize that two tourists are about to get on the wrong bus; while he may interrupt to inform the tourists, he likely won't feel any obligation to do so unless the tourists specifically ask him for help or information first, transforming his role from a simple bystander to a more active participant. Intervening will still mostly likely be seen as helpful and morally correct, but at the same time the local will be going 'out of his way' to help, rather than simply doing what he is required to do. At the same time, roles experience pressures, strains, and expectations from different directions and sources: police officers on the street are performing a role that others may not be able to 'take on' in the same way the officer experiences that role simply because they are unaware of what factors drives the officer's decision making—the officer might not personally care much about minor offenses but feel pressure from his supervisors, the department generally, or due to the presence of onlookers, to 'do something'—in this case the meaning of behavior and outcome are still being negotiated, but the terms and deeper meanings may not be as obvious to all participants. Of course, the individual does not need to fully understand the motives, drives, or obligations of a social role in order to interpret that: it may be enough for the individual to understand that it is normal for a police officer to sometimes issue a ticket and sometimes a warning, just as some interactions are overt and clear negotiations with various plausible outcomes and other are ritualized and formulaic where the outcome is essentially a given. The function of social roles as frames for attributing expectations for 'normal behavior' in contexts is one aspect of symbolic interactionist analysis, but this view of roles and particularly their fluidity, negotiations, and management has been central to the development of ethnographic, participant-observation based research. (Agar 1986, Adler and Adler 1987, Fine 2003) If presumed meanings are only fully expressed through social interaction (rather than through detailed analysis of the object itself, or by "isolating the particular psychological elements that produce the meaning" [Blumer 1969: 4]) then a researcher must be able to witness these actions taking place, or even take on the role themselves, to maintain a 'naturalistic' setting. Katz (2002) states that "the actor's 'definition of a situation' is not, as the phrase misleadingly suggests, an instant cognitive decision; it is an objectively constrained process." (260) The expectations and structures that constrain processes

of meaning-making are themselves being altered or negotiated, but the adaptation of more 'visible' roles can aid in these communicative processes: while a significant literature exists simply debating what the concept of "police" means to society, an individual encountering a uniformed police officer will generally be able to interpret the most relevant social meaning of "police officer" immediately, and the officer, in turn, can react and choose to present him- or herself in a specific way. Managing roles as an insider or outsider is a significant task both in normative processes of socialization (such as starting a new job, or entering the police academy) as well as in ethnographic field research in how it can affect the type of situations the researcher is allowed into and to what extent participants modify or adapt their behavior to the presence of 'outsiders.' (Peshkin 1984)

Interactionism as a perspective focuses primarily on individuals or small groups where individual actions can be observed. Interactionist studies within the field of policing have been highly influential, particularly the work of Egon Bittner (1967, 1970) and of Peter Manning (1977, 1988, 2003) which emphasize how police can give meaning to situations which can itself be translated into further meaningful action. Manning's later research has emphasized symbolic action and meaning making at the organizational level through the production of official report and communication at various levels (see also Meehan 1986). An interactionist approach is particularly fitting to the case at hand, as community-oriented officers in Brandenburg work alone and spend more time among the public than in clearly defined institutional settings such as the police station, and involve themselves in situations ranging from the clearly, even ritually, defined to overt negotiations where shared definitions palpably change based on the evolving dynamics of the situation. The interactionist approach is often (though not always) additionally characterized by the use of participant observation as a way to not just observe behavior but also to better 'take on' the relevant roles which guide the creation of intersubjective meaning. (cf. Agar 1986, Dellwing and Prus 2012)

3.3 Participant Observation, Naturalistic Inquiry, and Intersubjective Meaning

Participant observation is a methodological approach which attempts to bridge the gap (in terms of perspective, meaning making or culture) between the researcher and the subject(s) of interest. As the term implies, it is based on a combination of systematic / long-term observation of research subjects engaging in 'naturalistic practices,' that is, what they would plausibly be doing regardless of the presence

of an observer, as opposed to engaging in a more 'artificial' behaviors, such as completing tasks assigned by the researcher or responding to planned experimental conditions, and participation in situations with a distinct role-orientation connecting the researcher with the field setting. Observation can be done in many ways and cover various settings and practices, but its most traditional or conventional sense it refers to the open and acknowledged accompaniment of members of a 'life world' (e.g. a culturally defined or defining group, such as motorcycle enthusiasts, or a profession, such as doctors) as they engage in behaviors which are in some way guided or (even tangentially) framed or impacted by their membership in that community. The use of video or second-hand data is possible, but this is generally no replacement for 'being there' in terms of generating an interpretable and communicable understanding of the setting. (cf. Dellwing 2016) The elements of police work that are sociologically interesting do not stop when the officer's shift ends, but for practical purposes the benefits of participant observation are assumed to be greatest when the setting matches the broader socio-cultural orientation, i.e. police are most visible and definable as police while engaging in formal (or semi-formal) police work, on the clock: many officers were met with outside of working hours or spoken to informally, and much of the information from these meetings was useful, but these types of situations often stretch the limits of 'observation' and became something closer to open ended interviews or even focus groups, with officers providing a great deal of information and sharing anecdotes, stories, jokes, and experiences; ideally, these situations could be considered participatory in terms of shared participation in the broader culture of policing—in the cases where various officer and their friends, acquaintances, partners, etc. shared stories of policing and their community in a way that was not overtly done for my own benefit.

Participation refers not only to engagement in the broader community of the setting, but at times to engaging in the same tasks. The researcher, through participation, ideally learns to see the world in a similar way to those being observed, rather than simply bringing in and verifying or 'falsifying' outside assumptions: discovering what is 'significant' or 'important,' what is taken-for-granted or ignored, and how everyday events, images, narratives, and stimuli and interpreted and made sense of. Field roles in terms of participation include complete participant, complete observer, participant-as-observer, and observer-as-participant. (Adler and Adler 1987) The choice of field is often guided by the experience(s) of the researcher as well as where access is even possible, and though many, such as Jo Reichertz (Reichertz and Schröer 2003) generally advocate a 'naïve' approach, it is not uncommon for researchers to enter and explore fields with which they already have some familiarity. Policing research, in particular, has been heavily

influenced by the ethnographic work of police officers-turned-scholars, including Arthur Niederhoffer, Malcolm Young, Peter Moskos, and, in the German context, Rafael Behr. In many of the 'classical' works through the 1970 s it was normal for researchers to go through at least some level of police training, be armed, and be expected to intervene in at least some emergency situations. (Van Maanen 1988) Monique Marks (2004) encountered a similar social division in her participant observation in Durban, South Africa, where, as a field researcher, she was presented with essentially an 'us or them' ultimatum, offered a weapon, and instructed to perform policing tasks such as searching suspects. Today these types of situations are the exception rather than the rule, particularly in Germany and other western European countries where police training takes years rather than months or weeks and the exercise of police authority by field researchers is likely to be seen as problematic and risky. The current study involved more observer-oriented roles, with attempts made to avoid disturbing the 'natural' interaction between police and citizens, though in many other cases my role as a researcher was primary and itself triggered new discussions and rounds of storytelling.[2] It should be noted that in the course of fieldwork I was only specifically asked on two occasions to outright assist in 'police matters': both situations involved direct or stopping traffic and are not considered to have unduly blurred the boundary between researcher role and police role. On several minor occasions I translated for the police or others between German and English, but these cases never involved 'formal' police encounters and were generally individuals simply asking for directions: in the few cases where officers needed to communicate in English with individuals specifically for police business I was not asked to translate or intervene and did not offer to. Participation

[2] In some cases, the police officer to be accompanied announced in advance to scheduled meeting participants that a "researcher from America" would be coming. In one case this led to several employees for the Ordnungsamt expecting to have to conduct the meeting in English; they were relieved not to have to do this, but I was more involved in the small talk and general discussions than a 'pure observer' role would suggest. Simply stating I was from the US was often enough to alter an encounter in some way, and so managing roles become somewhat tricky. The question of how much I was participating would depend on the particular role: in terms of formal police work I was almost exclusively an observer, but in terms of more informal conversation the flow of conversation typically necessitated my involvement which required introductions and then an explanation of my presence; the 'real' story was already cumbersome and complicated as it often resulted in various follow-up questions or (on occasion) attempts to switch the conversation to English. This was especially so in the many cases where encountered individuals had a personal relationship with the officer and so introductions were more 'social' than simply formalities: the fact that identifiable police work is difficult to separate from broader 'community involvement' is one of the main thrusts of this work, and these scenes underscored it.

in this case primarily meant accompanying the officer (typically only one officer) and observing encounters but attempting to minimize my presence, typically by explaining it as simply as possible—the accompanied officers tended to prefer to say that I was "being trained" because they found this was less threatening or distracting for the others, rather than claiming I was "observing" the police, which despite not being completely truthful I considered to be acceptable and not overly disruptive or unnecessarily covert. (cf. Peshkin 1984) Managing my own role in various situations was crucial as many encounters were found to be less a bureaucratic transaction and more dynamic, intimate, and ad hoc, structured around existing or situational interpersonal relations, connections which could plausibly be threatened by the presence of an outside observer. For this reason it was important both to guarantee anonymity as well as to establish myself within interactions as both an 'insider,' that is, someone who is not there to challenge the conduct being observed, as a 'harmless,' as someone who would be unable to effectively act against that conduct; this was the best way to maintain both a connection to ongoing and developing interactions—rather than as a detached outsider with no recourse to follow-up questions—while still generally maintaining their 'natural state,' that is, the types of behaviors that are routine and normal and, as 'artificial' as they might be in the dramatization, are not purely being enacted because of the presence of an outside observer.

3.3.1 Naturalistic Inquiry

Katz (2002) describes the creation of "naturalistic theory" as a way of explaining social conduct, stating that researchers should seek evidence about:

1) how it is constituted through interaction, in one or another collaboratively and in anticipation of its meaning from the standpoint of others;
2) how everything, even the most seemingly idle comment or glance, is part of a practical course of action, a project, the innovative execution of a recipe, an effort to do a certain kind of social thing;
3) how all awareness and action is created by corporeal processes that are themselves beyond the actor's direct awareness, but that are visible to the researcher. (259)

While displaying the inherent difficulties in establishing a 'faithful' ethnographic account, and the risk of simply swapping one (outsider) perspective for another,

this suggests three elements of analysis within a participant observation methodology. The first is on the interactive component, particularly interactions with individuals both inside and (especially for the present study) outside the group to be studied. Egon Bittner (1965) presents a suitable description of exploring how meaning is created within situations:

> The investigator can… decide that the meaning of the concept, and all of the terms and determinations that are subsumed under it, must be discovered by studying their use in real scenes of action by persons whose competence to use them is socially sanctioned… in order to understand the meaning of the actor's thought and action, which Weber sought, one must study *how* the terms of his discourse are assigned to real objects and events by normally competent persons in ordinary situations. (247)

In the same way that the field researcher is essentially an outsider to the life world of policing and must develop a new or analytically grounded understanding of the immediate situation, so too must individuals who come into contact with police—though for very different reasons. Choosing to observe the police in particular means that citizens within police encounters are (almost always) only observed within that encounter. While police officers typically had the opportunity to follow up, contextualize, rationalize, or further discuss events with me (in some way mirroring their ability to craft, within legitimate constraints, factual versions of events) the focus remained as much as possible on interpreting and attempting to recreate the processes of meaning-making strictly within the encounter—it was this approach in particular that lead to the realization that not only a great deal of police work is unspoken or mutually presumed, but that particularly in the specific context of the study (community-oriented policing within a predominantly rural region) even police encounters with a short duration often included a significant portion of references to personal histories and past events which implied much more than they stated: understanding these references was not essential, however, to understanding how they were presented, shared, rejected, modified and generally used as a practice by both police and others. Police contacts with citizens represent a crossing of observable negotiated process with social structural factors, and in this case personal knowledge, relationships, and conceptualizations of community were powerful symbols for social structure.

"Idle comments or glances," as Katz writes, were also key to providing plausible meaning to social encounters. The rhetoric used by police within encounters was highly relevant in terms of social practices and how it framed the need for others to accept, even tacitly, the definition of the situation provided by the police. (cf. Feest and Blankenburg 1972) As mentioned above, police often took

the opportunity to further explain or explore prior events, and the specific wording and recounting of these events—even if they couldn't always be taken at face value—showed different strategies for legitimizing and synchronizing accounts (cf. Clarke 2006): even the most extreme case where a police officer legitimizes behavior that to outsiders appears to be an abuse of authority demonstrate what type of institutional understandings of normality, acceptability, and desirability are framing the crafting of that narrative. No events these overt were observed, however, and if anything the tendency was in the other direction with semi-formal encounters having no (easily) formally definable outcome, e.g. a series of minor incidents being discussed but not considered in terms of what should be done, but sometimes requiring the use of institutional shorthand to clarify that the encounter was effectively concluded, such as describing the conversation as "giving a warning" or stating that information was collected, even if no new useful or actionable information was collected by the officer. Simple utterances or routine statements also form to anchor the relationship being constructed or imagined between individuals: "Even to answer a routine question presumes a relationship between a questioner and a respondent— if only an imagined one." (Gusfield 2003: 121) Idle comments often suggest basic assumptions that might not necessarily be shared by others—for example, a Revierpolizei officer pointed out a 'home for at-risk or endangered children' as we drove by it, following up, "but they aren't really a problem, they're younger, up to the 6th grade." This suggested that the connection between these children and 'being a problem,' though here being denied, was considered plausible and possibly even expected, as well as making a connection between (or exception for) problem-ness and age. Another officer described an annual music festival within his beat with two sentences, the second of which was simply, "the people take drugs there." At their most 'functional,' idle comments served to separate insiders, 'our' community, ideas of normality or normal behavior, etc. from outsiders, risks, and undesired behavior.

Exploring the attribution of motives (cf. Mills 1940, Burke 1966) even as idle comments, outside of face-to-face interactions between attributer and attributee, often reveals an interesting contradiction or contrast in how deviant or outsider behavior is presented as 'irrational,' incomprehensible, and thereby unpredictable but also presented as fitting within a pre-categorized type of causal identities which explain and make that behavior expectable. Blum and McHugh (1971) describe how "motive is a procedure" (103) and involves deeper questions of power and status rather than being 'just words':

> The paradigmatic procedure here is to ask the actor, 'Why…?' and expect him to cite a reason, goal, or intention, e.g., 'Why did you leave the party?'; 'Because I was bored';

> 'In order to make my appointment', etc. In some cases we take these reasons and call them symbols and meanings, but that sort of substitution does not really tell us much about the methodical ways in which such statements are generated to begin with—how, for example, the actor is constrained to cite a reason at all; how it takes the form it does (giving a reason instead of, say, telling a joke); how it comes to be acceptable to the hearer that it *is* an answer. In other words, its status as a common sense practical device, as opposed to mere idiosyncratic noise or gesture or cue, remains unstated. The methodic social and hence sociological feature of motive lies not in the concrete, substantive reason an actor would give for his behavior, but in the organized and sanctionable conditions that would regularly produce the giving of a reason by a competent member in the first place. The reason given is no more than the surface expression of some underlying rule(s) that the former requires in order to be understood. (101–102)

Revierpolizei officers often contrasted their behavior with that of US police officers, presenting examples from current events portrayed in news media as well as broader stereotypes and cultural images: in doing so they presented the behavior of US police as aggressive, violent and, most importantly, irrational, with phrases such as "I don't understand why they act like that." At the same time, they viewed these presumed behaviors as normal within the context and their reflections of American policing culture, and culture in the US in general, were certainly anchored to a large extent on their perceptions of these "axial events" (Manning 2003) and the offered stereotypes. At a micro-interactional level, similar patterns could be found even in how some officers discussed the strategies or approaches of their colleagues, with statements along lines of, "I don't understand why he does that, I would do this, but he must think that…" These rhetorical practices relate not only to the use of ascribing motives and (ir)rationality but also to the basic minimum infusion of intersubjectivity into speech and narratives of others (cf. Ezzy 1998): the meaning being presented lies, at a conceptual level, between the individuals, even if the framing is subjective and the attribution of rationality, normality, and in the end the overall definition on offer comes from the perspective of the speaker.

Katz's third point connects structure, society, institutional forces and the like to direct observable action. While it would be presumptuous to grant the scholar a monopoly on truth or the deeper vison to be the sole observer of hidden realities, the practical point here is simply to emphasize the intersubjectivity which (potentially, perhaps ideally) guides both participant observation and 'natural' encounters being observed. Katz (2002) notes that "intersubjectivity does not simply happen; it is a contingent and defeasible presumption that is constantly negotiated in a troublesome world." (261, cf. Schutz 1953) It is therefore important to identify these negotiations and the contingencies and exigencies which

structure, constrain, or channel them. Bittner (1965) states that in searching for 'deeper meaning' within institutions and organizations:

> the author of the rational scheme, typically the managerial technician who deals with organization in the 'technical sense,' will not be treated as having some sort of privileged position for understanding its meaning. By denying him the status of the authoritative interpreter we do not propose to tamper with the results of his work in the least. From our point of view he is merely the toolsmith. It seems reasonable that if one were to investigate the meaning and typical use of some tool, one would not want to be confined to what the toolmaker has in mind. (249)

This is based on a phenomenological assumption—that meaning is not naturally given but must be interpreted and acted out, and that ideas and concepts must be given form—linguistic, symbolic—in order to create meaning that can be shared and therefore establish (concepts of) structure. (Gadamer 1976) What a person says might not be what they mean, once taken within a different context, but the words they use might reflect the deeper meanings which can be construed and reconstructed in different ways. A person pointing out teenagers or young men 'loitering' on a street corner commenting "they're all just criminals" likely is neither intending to claim that *all* teenagers or young men are criminals nor specifically *only* the ones being indicated, but rather is making a broader ascription and claiming an identity for others, positing or establishing the identified individuals as part of a broader (here vaguely defined) classification of individuals for whom the statement is plausibly true in the view of the speaker—of course, the use of the term 'criminal' is also likely to be cultural shorthand rather than a legal determination, and the utterance overall tells us more about the speaker's framing of society or social factors / distinctions than it does about the group being discussed. Similarly, an officer stating that music festival attendees "take drugs" may not be indicating that *all* participants do so, but he is indicating a general class (which at some level, even if tautologically, implies motive—drug-takers take drugs) which would narratively provide a better justification for certain forms of action, i.e. supporting the increased use of strict enforcement rather than 'discretion,' whereas cases of 'local' youth using drugs could more easily be written off as simply "due to boredom" and not indicative of their inherent qualities. This takes on an additional and more prescient structural dimension when the person making such identifications has an accepted power and authority to make labels stick—such a police officer who has the ability to transform someone (officially) into a gang member. (Trujillo and Vitale 2019, cf. Becker 1963)

Structure exists in micro-level interactions most visibly in how it is played out through words and actions, regardless of their 'positivistic' connections: for example, the fact that police officers in the US—in various forums including field research, interviews, as well as social media and self-depictions—complain about being 'handcuffed' by the courts or regulations is less useful as a statement to be fact checked but rather is indicative of a variety of structural elements, such as the establishment of an 'us vs. them' mentality, the crime-fighter image and the organizational emphasis on 'catching bad guys' as the chief measure of success, and the stability of police cultural forms and ways of speaking over time even as situations and organizations change. (cf. Skolnick 1985, Crank 1994, Waddington 1999, Sparrow 2016) Additionally, police in Germany are fully authorized to more-or-less unconditionally ask individuals in public for ID, without needing a specified basis or reason, yet still tend to structure their uses of this power to fulfill separate goals or functions which they themselves identify. (Behr 2000, Hunold 2011, Hunold et al. 2016) Police in the US, by contrast, can only ask for ID or conduct searches in legally defined situations—the tactic of 'stop and frisk' essentially exploits a loophole by establishing an artificial justification of risk, claiming that the mere presence of a police officer establishes a risk requiring an individual to be searched and present ID: the legal standard is a "reasonable suspicion" by the officer that the individual might be armed, but these suspicion does not need to be further defined or grounded. (Harcourt 2001, Trujillo and Vitale 2019, cf. Quinton 2011 for an exploration of the British context) Stop-and-frisk is also a widely discussed, controversial policy (which has become deeply associated with "Broken Windows") meaning that individuals stopped by the police on a pretense, asked to present ID, and searched, have a different meaning in terms of power-dynamics, discrimination, and the image of the police that, to generalize, would likely be 'read' entirely different by a German tourist in New York being put in the same position.[3]

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[3] A personal anecdote might further illustrate this: an exchange student from Germany was stopped by police on the street in Newark, NJ while drinking a beer covered in a brown paper bag. Based on television and film portrayals, the student assumed it was acceptable to consume alcohol in this manner in public (in contrast alcohol consumption in Germany is almost always acceptable in public and not immediately a police matter lacking other elements) and was unable to understand either that he was being punished or, later on, why. It was later explained that the 'rule' about public drinking has a long history in American policing (Van Maanen 1974) but is primarily intended for 'street people,' the homeless, etc., where the police themselves can see no benefit in enforcement. In this case the fact that rules are selectively enforced effectively selected the German exchange student for punishment in cases where locals or the disadvantaged might be overlooked, based on constructions of the purpose of policing the streets that were previously invisible to the student: he may just as

The fact that the researcher generally enters the field, or at least the specific local setting, as a stranger[4] can allow for the combining, comparison, integration or fusion of various perspectives (theoretical and reflecting various cultural frameworks including those 'unique' to the field setting) which Katz and Hallett (2014) refer to as "ethnographic authority." The goal of the researcher is to understand the actions of others as they are taken—in terms of how meaning situationally created and negotiated—but also to maintain the ability to imagine and represent the larger concepts behind those actions that often go unremarked on or unseen. (cf. Bude 2007) Clifford Geertz (1973) introduced the concept of "deep play" in which understandings of relatively fixed structures are reflected and represented in other forms of (semi-) ritualized action—in Geertz's example of illegal Balinese cockfights which, in their performance and standards of 'decorum' or emotionality, mirrored social hierarchies and political power. Deep play suggests that actions which might be viewed as outwardly 'irrational' (e.g. from

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easily have come out of this situation thinking he had been targeted as a German, a foreigner, a student, or simply been the victim of a scam, extortion, or police corruption. (cf. Pepinsky 1984)

[4] The need for the participant observer to be stranger was formerly emphasized in the ethnographic methodological literature within sociology, in respect of the fact that these methods were primarily derived from anthropology where 'strangerness' was a given. Being an outsider was emphasized as a strength of participant observation over other methods, although other disciplines would use the method more in terms of 'systematic social observation' (cf. Sampson and Raudenbush 1999) which was often used as a more 'naturalistic' way to generate pure data for further analysis (by any suitable analysist, not necessarily by the field worker[s] who collected it) but lacking the interactionist, phenomenological and hermeneutic presuppositions of ethnographic methodologies. Contemporary ethnographic methods, following the trajectory set by the Chicago School, put less emphasis on the *need* to be a complete outsider, though it is still presented as an ideal by many scholars within interactionism and interpretive hermeneutics, such as Gary Alan Fine and Jo Reichertz. Arthur Vidich (1955) provides a good example of the 'classical view' and how the knowledge of the outsider researcher is contextually 'superior' to that of the locals who can provide data:

> In almost any society in this postcolonial and specialized age, the observer is likely to find persons with a penchant for seeing themselves objectively in relation to their society, such as the traveled Pacific Islander and the small-town "intellectual." But they differ from the social scientist in one important respect: a portion of their experience, no matter how much it is subsequently objectified, has been gained within the society under study. When the social scientist studies a society, he characteristically makes his first contacts with these marginal persons, and they will vary according to his interests and the identity he claims for himself. (357)

a utilitarian or rational choice perspective), such as high stakes betting or making threats that can't be backed up, are given significant meaning in the immediate performing of those actions through the interpretation within a less visible rendering of 'rules' at varying levels, in the way that even showing a willingness to take a risk might be a demonstration of values or integrity, or winning over a competitor brings more to the victor than monetary reward, and the status he gains likely extends to his compatriots or community members when that victory is over a perennial and feared competitor from a rival community. In a similar way, the deference expected by the police from some and the deference shown by others could be posited to reflect societal hierarchies and relative status.[5] Resistance to the police and non-cooperation in various forms could be similarly constructed as symbolic and requiring a reading of society and images of inequality or repression that extends beyond the exigencies of the situation. (cf. Shon 2000) A "thick description" should be provided which emphasizes the symbolic nature of even practical, physical actions, objects, and roles. (Geertz 1973) The connection of process to structure is what turns the method of participant-observation into the creation of an ethnographic account.

3.4 Ethnography and Meaning

> "In a single phrase, the world is ceaselessly becoming what it means."
>
> – George Herbert Mead (1938: 515)

Ethnography is often used synonymously with participant observation (and the remainder of this work will be no exception.) In a more technical sense, participant observation is the method of data collection, and ethnography could be

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[5] Manning (2003) emphasizes axial media events as key shapers of political opinion—at least in terms of offering useable narratives and images—and these events often can be used to analyze, and are themselves an analysis or cultural working-out, social structure. For example, the murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ron Goldman and subsequent arrest of O.J. Simpson was treated in the (extremely heated) media environment both as a case of racism and police prejudice as well as a case of special treatment being afforded to rich elites and celebrities. Similarly, the 2014 Ferguson riots in the US overlapped with the fieldwork in Brandenburg, and the mediatized images and 'takes' on American policing were often invoked in discussions with Revierpolizei officers. The problem here is that these are mass media and cultural explorations of institutional orientations which essentially deny the agency of individual actors—at the same time, it is naïve to assume that cultural shorthand and media images play no (or even little) role in the construction of images within the academic literature. (cf. Bourdieu 1993)

considered a broader methodology of how participant observation is conducted (e.g. is the setting considered to be a specific city, working-class neighborhoods, police encounters, the intersection of all three, etc.?) as well as the production of an account and analysis of the research setting which can be interpretable and plausible in an outside contexts (typically of other researchers in the same or similar fields.) The two are in most cases intertwined, as the manner in which data is collected speaks to the ethnographic aims of the research and ethnographic data cannot always simply be filled in or expanded in the event that new questions or interests are raised or a ‘gap’ is found in the data; the fact that even systematic data collection will show evolution or changes in how situations are viewed and captured (in notes or memory) speaks both to the ethnographic spirit (see also Feyerabend 2010), that the researcher is able to ‘learn’ in the field and not only upon concluding the collection of data, and also to the difficulties in systematically analyzing data that might constrained or tinted by a recognizable chronological or situational development, such as an improved rapport in the field leading observed actors to ‘let down their guard’ over time rather than play to the fieldworkers expectations (or vice-versa.) (Lüders 2007) Ethnography and ethnographic methods (which are not strictly limited to participant observation and often include unstructured interviews and media analysis) were adapted (or adopted) from anthropological work, with significant overlap not just in methods but in concepts, topics, and fields of study, but also influenced by journalism—Robert Park, for example, was originally a journalist and emphasized to his students the search for a binding narrative. (cf. Park 1952) Ethnography is an attempt to reconstruct a culture not by the use of objective measurements but rather by collecting instructive observations of *acts* against a meaningful backdrop which can be effectively interpreted by nature of the ethnographer having been there physically, socially, and culturally.

Ethnography therefore requires access both practically and socially or organizationally: one cannot simply view something from a new perspective by standing in a different spot, but must also observe, gauge, consider, and (finally) preempt the responses of others who are to share that perspective. While participant observation is typically used, as here, to refer to somewhat standardized method for collecting data which can be categorized, combined, correlated, patterned, and otherwise played with, ethnographic fieldwork is rarely assumed to be standard or routine, as potentially conflicting goals of maintaining access, developing relationships and rapport, maintaining objectivity and an image of the same, the inability to see everything, pressures to observe ‘new’ or ‘unique’ actions and events over the routine, and distrust at individual and organizational levels all

can shape the process of research. Peter and Patricia Adler (1987) describe the ethnographic process in terms of role management and trust, writing:

> Field researchers, then, should enter their settings, announce their intentions, and begin to interact with the people they encounter. Traditionally, their initial activities are unfocused and merely involve "hanging out." Eventually, they build up to asking, "What is going on?" Researchers should let members of the setting gradually get to know them as they hang around in this manner, so that people realize the non-threatening nature of their research intentions and their overall interest and sincerity. (12)

Questions of access usually involve gatekeepers and key informants. Gatekeepers allow access to both sites and social groups, which may have implications because they serve as legitimizers of the researcher's presence, but their approval may suggest ulterior or conflicting motives. Some settings—such as inside a police station or the passenger seat of a patrol car—are simply inaccessible without official permission, requiring a complicated process of formally legitimizing the research project allowing for access. Other settings may be public in nature, but the individuals who make up key social groups—for example, drug dealers in a park—may not be very forthcoming unless someone they already know and trust is prepared to vouch for the researcher and essentially open the doors, or least the windows, to a new social realm. In the present case access was negotiated through several individuals but essentially from the top of the hierarchy down (through the Ministry of the Interior for Brandenburg and then at the level of *Polizeiinspektion*, essentially policing at the county level.) This meant that access was negotiated not so much based on personal relationships as on organizational hierarchies: in this case it was specifically necessary to reassure those involved in the study that I was in no way a 'spy' for administrators or interested in solving research questions posited by political leadership, i.e. I was not engaging in an evaluation or a study of efficiency—key informants, those who provide not only 'raw data' but also explanations and frameworks for 'translating' that data, could be maintained by giving them an outlet to 'tell their story' and express frustrations in an outside context, but at the same time, this ran the risk of the research appearing less practical to those who were facilitating it. While some minor conflicts were involved—particularly in the sense that some officers felt that the new political leadership wanted to present them as 'doing nothing' so that they could be given additional workloads (outside of community-oriented work,) and there was some initial concern that my report might be used to confirm that—the focus of the fieldwork was on citizen encounters rather than the micropolitics of the organization with the station, and officers seemed to be persuaded that I

was interested in the variety of complexity of the ‘non-criminal’ work they did. It was important that the police officers knew I did not expect to see ‘action’ or violence but rather their jobs as they normally perform them so that they did not feel obligated to show me something in particular or think that most of the time spent together was wasted. There did seem to be some effort by the Revierpolizei officer, however, to provide a tour or to show things: the nature of the work meant that appointments were often fluid and unscheduled meetings or drop-ins were common, and often the fact that I was accompanying was reason enough to make a stop to visit, for example, a local community group that might have been put off until later or not made at all. In other cases, officers attempted to show me every street and corner of their beat, at some point commenting that they themselves had not seen specific areas or even villages in almost a year. This did not substantially conflict with the ‘normal’ work of the Revierpolizei, and the variety of locations visited provided a broad enough span to suggest that nothing was being hidden or avoided, and it was clear both from observations and the diversity of narratives that this ‘randomness’ and lack of a completely fixed day-to-day schedule, though at times altered by my presence, was central to how the job was seen and valued by officers. Officers often ‘narrated’ their geographic and social space, providing a great deal of background on the people and places we visited or passed by and on events that had happened in the distant or immediate past: this information was useful both in contextualizing other observations as well as in seeing the role of local knowledge in police work. At one point (further discussed in Chapter Five) I accompanied an officer who was being groomed to replace a retiring Revierpolizei officer on several shifts as he was given a similar treatment—shown various parts of the jurisdictions and provided with general and specific statements about which people and groups are connected, where problems might come from, where it is quiet, where a patrol car make residents nervous and where it makes them feel secure, and so on. This also provided a chance to, at a basic level, ‘triangulate’ the data in terms of how officers spoke about people, places, communities, etc. to me and to each other. Similar experiences occurred in other cases where officers traveled together either for specific tasks, for public events, in city districts where cooperation was more common, or in the cases of another officer who, at the beginning of fieldwork, had only been working for several weeks and so was often assisted by the officer from the neighboring district.

The participation element of participant observation is not effective simply as a method for data collection, but also ethnographically for allowing the researcher into a community and to establish a role from which interpretation can be done (reflexively.) In terms of police work, for example, it has been suggested that

participant observation is sometimes the only effective method because data will rarely be shared with researchers who are not in some way known and trusted by the police, and gaining access and establishing rapport for the purposes of observation can also lead to additional materials and data sources ranging from the possibility of conducting interviews or focus groups, unpublished statistics or raw data, information and data from calls for service, and even the opportunity to conduct experimental research. (Marks 2004, cf. Manning 1988) While the focus remained on observation and unstructured interviews, a great deal of information about police operations, structure, changes and ongoing reform, and planned community partnerships was available only after I entered the field and got to know individuals at various levels of the organization: in many cases this is less about the information being secret or hidden and more about understanding what type of information is available at all.[6]

Being a stranger or insider is not simply a binary factor: strangers can be constructed and identified in various ways and approached, treated, and trusted in ways suitable to their perceived role *in situ*. Similarly, insiders are not necessarily equals or teammates, but may consider others rivals, incompetent, naïve, etc. while still considering them a legitimate part of a social circle, and may trust or confide in others while still considering them outsiders—perhaps even because of this. Trust is a major factor in how these types of access-seeking roles are perceived, and should not be simply considering a function of 'getting to know' individuals. Trust—in ethnographic fieldwork as in policing (cf. Manning 2003)—involves the fit or incongruity or expectations and actions and one's own certainty that expectations will be a reliable predictor of the future. Informants and actors in the field will develop varying views of the researcher based on actions, statements, appearances, etc., and decide not simply how 'honest' they should be, but essentially what type—including format—of information to present and what it means overall to provide information—statements and access for observations—to the researcher. A significant aspect of ethnographic access is establishing views of the researcher as 'harmless,' ideally as someone with 'no horse in this race,' outside of the micropolitics of the field setting, or at least (likely more realistically) as either someone inconsequential enough to not be threatening to station or self-image or else useful enough in providing an outlet for communicated expression.

[6] For example, one of the officers who contributed as a key informant and helped in facilitating access and scheduling was also responsible for editing an internal newsletter. My research project was included in the newsletter at one point, and the entire process gave me a better understanding of the organizational side of internal communications.

In terms of the current study, I have elsewhere described my field role as "double outsider" (Bielejewski 2014), in that—in a policing social-world in which actors are typically either police officers or have a role defined through their immediate relationship and interaction with an officer—I was not a police officer or the subject of police work, but I was also new to the region more generally and, decisively, not from Germany. With only a handful of exceptions, all interactions between myself and officers or others occurred in German, but my accent labeled me as a foreigner, and the recognition of this often lead to a serious of follow-up questions the response to which often seemed to spell the difference between receiving a nuanced and complex explanation of a topic or the "light" version. Although I mentioned that I had already been living in Germany for several years, I was often met with responses suggesting that my 'master status' in the field was "American researcher[7]," and I was often given basic explanations of elements of German society, government, history, etc. with which I was somewhat or very familiar—but these recountings were analytically and dramaturgically significant, in that they provided a better understanding of how larger social structures—society, community, the role of government—were being constructed and with which vocabularies. Though this was not the primary focus of this work, much of this was presented in East-West terms, suggesting that the 'simplified narratives' of unification are best considered as convenient fictions but also better left unchallenged in many public forums. (cf. Glaeser 2000) It would be a stretch to refer to the accompanied officer as 'defensive,' but similar narratives were frequent and I did not appear to be treated as someone who shouldn't hear such talk, despite its potential conflict with 'official views.' Most of this talk was limited to jokes about "the good old days," observations about how 'despite what they say in the West' not much has actually changed in daily life (or police work), and affirmations that the Revierpolizei is just an extension of its earlier East German incarnation (*Abschnittsbevollmächtiger*) with a new color scheme (an idea that no longer appears to be controversial among leadership and was even expressed in police newsletters.) Other comments that—as framed—*may not* have been as directly expressed to 'single outsiders' (i.e. German researchers not from the local region) criticized how 'national media' or 'Wessis' (West

[7] In some cases, it seemed apparent that this was used in a less-than-serious context, and was more practical in allowing for a more informal line of communication between the officer and myself. One officer in particular took every opportunity to make jokes related to the US or my perceived expectations of East Germany as an American. At one point we attended a public event where different officers were working an information and public relations desk for the police; the officer commented that perhaps I should work the desk for a while, because "everyone has seen a cop, but no one here has ever seen an American before."

Germans) often portrayed the East in general and the broader region as home to neo-Nazi activity—the specific activities, including nationalist and anti-immigrant marches, were described by several officers and local officials as primarily representing 'outsiders,' mostly from the West, who simply found the area to be a convenient meeting place for various groups. Further evidence was presented in the knowledge of specific involved individuals in the local region and arguments that their activities had little or no local support, but (in the words of officers) it was a "simpler story" if media, possessing pictures of banned symbols and hateful messages, could portray the scene as characteristic of a specific region rather than endemic of a deeper, not always visible, but nation-wide subculture.[8] The ostensible form of trust to be established here is one in which an interested, minimally biased, considers the 'informant' or narrator to be an expert, giving them a reason and security to talk openly—mimicking if not approaching a 'backstage' situation (Goffman 1959) and aiding in establishing a rapport. My outsider status as an American additionally provided reference symbols and common vocabularies which were often used as a way to refer to the work and ideals of the officers: in a basic ethnographic sense, that which is sought is that which is so routine, obvious, and taken-for-granted by locals that it cannot or would not be easily explained—providing a 'straw man,' as it were, allows for a dichotomy of values which can aid in contextualizing actions and statements, e.g. police in the US were often criticized or made the butt of jokes for their perceived enjoyment and dependence on violence, suggesting that 'peacefulness' or some counterpoint to violence is valued—at least rhetorically—by Revierpolizei officers in Brandenburg; the actual situation was more complex, with violence playing various often conflicting roles in narratives and within encounters, but the framing used by officers in presenting narrative accounts made it clear that they at least considered violence—in word and deed—something to be used carefully and with consideration. As it was quickly demonstrated that police could criticize policing

[8] In this context, it should be noted that the 'radical shift' of large anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim protests (under the banner of 'Pegida') only began—meekly—towards the very end of the field research, the nationalistic 'Alternative for Germany' (AfD) political party was a fringe party with no seats in any state parliaments or the Bundestag, and local AfD politicians were often discussed by officers and Ordnugsamt officials as a nuisance due to constant demands for police protection for rallies which (at the time) only drew a handful of supporters and their constant public statements that police were willfully turning a blind eye to crime by immigrants. While the AfD has become known worldwide as a major face of a general global movement, my first ever experience of the party was a Revierpolizei officer and Ordnungsamt officer describing how "ridiculous" and "hopeless" the party was, at least locally, because a local party official was trying to make the police "into the enemy" but also "force us to do the work he wants."

in the US without offending me or starting an argument, this often proved to be a useful topic for describing and exploring aspects of police work and values. In the same way, East-West constructions (though less commonly used in a serious way) were sometimes used as I was generally seen to be a complete outsider and thereby ‘open’ to the officers’ depictions in a way in which insiders might not be. It was critical to establish and maintain a researcher identity which established legitimacy and essentially that it was ‘worth the trouble’ to explain things to me, but also that was not seen as outright hostile or in (definition-related) conflict with the identities with which I came in contact. It was important to maintain relationships in which we could become involved in sharing experiences and narratives alternating (and simultaneously) as situational insiders and, in terms of background and assumptions, as outsiders.

3.4.1 One of Us: Involvement, Marginality, and Access

Involvement is a critical issue that affects the collection of data as well as the role of the researcher, rapport, and trust in ways that may impact access and objectivity. To what extent the researcher is participating is not simply a question of gaining access to the field site or of perspective and membership, but also directly impacts what scenes may be viewed or overlooked, often meaning the difference between ‘unfiltered’ first-hand accounts of an event and relying on second-hand descriptions. (Duneier 2011) Two generalized forms of researcher access run the risk of at times missing a ‘bigger picture’ or at least limiting the researcher in terms of which levels, (local) groups and individuals can be effectively incorporated into descriptions of the world. Researchers sometimes gain access to a setting at the ground level in the way that nearly anyone, or at least most suitable candidates, could: by simply showing up and expressing interest. An explanation of the research might serve as armor against suspicion or distrust, e.g. as a way to explain both the ethnographer’s naïveté (expressed in the use of questions and lack of ‘usefulness’) and curiosity and desire to see everything. A researcher might begin effectively working a job, or at least accompanying those who do the most visible version of that job: a researcher may be asked to help put up posters, work a bar, or clean hotel rooms, for example, but this kind of work rarely overlaps with the settings where political operatives, owners, or managers discuss and make key decisions. (Adler and Adler 1987) Alternatively—as in this study—the researcher could gain formal legitimate access from the top-down, with access

to varying levels provided by administrators and bosses, but without necessarily giving the researcher 'free reign' to come and go: even doing so raises potential questions of what *should* be viewed, or how much of a particular activity, group, or setting should be observed before moving on. Continuously accompanying the same individuals or groups and observing similar actions enough that they can be understood in terms of both routine and variation may suggest to higher-ups that the researcher is 'looking for dirt,' is hoping to find something more interesting, or is simply aimless. Gatekeepers often grant condition access, or may be helpful in facilitating transport and scheduling (which was my experience in Brandenburg) which can be invaluable but at the same time make it difficult to observe things, people, work shifts, etc. which are not on the planned schedule.

This became relevant in the present study in terms of defining the 'setting' conceptually—at its broadest level the research setting was the Brandenburger Polizei in *Landkreis Falkenmark* (which is a pseudonym, though this was not a precondition of access or demanded by any participants.) In a few cases even participant observation was conducted outside of the study area—in two cases leaving the state entirely, and in one involving police from a different Landkreis, though these were all still cases representative of the situation for police officers and administrators locally. Though my major interest was in the Reveripolizei, I was originally assigned day-to-day schedules to accompany various officers primarily in the Revierpolizei but including other units at well. The original administrative intent seemed to be to have me accompany each officer in the Revierpolizei once and have some experience with other units to show the range of tasks.[9] This plan was later altered or expanded to incorporate multiple shifts with the same officers, but in practice a great deal of improvisation occurred: fixed schedules were usually made at least a week in advance, but the actual work schedules and specially the planned tasks of Revierpolizei officers were

[9] Though not specifically relevant to the case at hand, a clear parallel was noticed between this understanding of what a researcher might want to see and the trends in advertising for policing as a career: overlapping with the study period I also taught sociology courses at a German police academy in a different state, and one course assignment included an analysis of police advertising in different formats. One of the most obvious observations by most students and for most of the content was the emphasis on the diversity of jobs and tasks within policing, with typical video ads for television or social media including helicopter pilots, divers, SWAT teams (*Sondereinsatzkommando,* or SEK), motorcycle patrols and in older examples horse patrols. These advertisements also tended to emphasize search-and-rescue rather than criminal enforcement—this is not to say that police officers or academy recruits took these images seriously or celebrated them, however.

less fixed. On some occasions I would be assigned to accompany an officer only to be told that that officer had taken the day off in order to work on the weekend, or that the officer would either be in the office completing paperwork and making phone calls all day or else would be transporting prisoners or making arrests (the latter two being activities I was not permitted to go along on) and so I would instead accompany another officer from the same station. In other cases, despite the schedule, I would be told that another officer would be doing some 'more relevant' to my specific research interests and given the choice of accompanying them instead: this was the case with several public events where an officer needed to make a preliminary 'scouting' check to determine what type of police presence would be needed, and it wasn't clear in advance if no, one, some, or all officers from the municipality would be attending. Sometimes these were simple questions of whether my focus was observing the officer or the event, such as in cases where I attended an event with many officers present and was not required to stay with the same officer, but in other cases it was necessary to clarify the situation with the involved officers and administration. The risk of being given 'tourist treatment' can be significant in cases where administrators, owners, or other powerful stakeholders can exert control over the ability of the research to observe different types, and particularly potentially problematic, controversial, or hidden types, or behavior. Overall, however, access was rarely restricted—the cases where it was based on safety concerns or regulations, i.e. serving arrest warrants, was not considered a significant hindrance in light of the fact that access was negotiated based at least partially on the (truthful) admission that my research interests were much less on violence or serious crime and more on everyday community interactions, and so the dearth (but not complete lack) of observations of overt conflict and violence was not so much an attempt to shield me from the knowledge of these events as a willful attempt to focus on 'routine' work and a conscious attempt to realize that even the events that were observed were not the *entirety* of police work.

Marginality arguably played a role. Though less often discussed today, earlier ethnographic accounts stemming from anthropology tended to emphasize a strong core culture, and viewed deviance or outsider status as the exception but with marginal individuals playing an effective role in transitioning the field research into the community. (Adler and Adler 1987, cf. Vidich 1955) This mirrors the (sometimes presented as ideal) marginal role of the researcher, who must be both within the field but still maintain perspectives and 'independence' from outside. It would be misleading to refer to Revierpolizei officers as 'marginal,' but the

transition between the 'institutional' environment of police administration as indicated within the police station and its bureaucratic geographies (cf. Millie 2012) and the streets as viewed from inside and outside a police car is, even among 'standard' patrol policing, often immense. (cf. Van Maanen 1974) Revierpolizei officers travel one to a car and set their schedules independently, in contrast to the standard two-per-car fixed scheduled nature of policing in Germany, and often maintain offices or meeting rooms outside of the police station where they have significantly more contact with local residents, community groups, local government officials, and outside agencies such as the Ordnungsamt than with police officers. This relative freedom was often cited as a reason for choosing the work, and could easily explain the lack of reticence by many officers in speaking plainly and emphasizing the discretionary, communicative and symbolic aspects of their job over institutional concerns.[10]

3.5 Background: The Revierpolizei and the Community

3.5.1 Structure and Agency

The German state of Brandenburg has existed in its current form since (re)unification in 1990, though it has a much older history both within the different incarnations of Germany and as an independent state. It is Germany's fifth-largest state by area but tenth-most populous, with approximately 2.5 million residents. Brandenburg completely encompasses the city-state of Berlin, itself with approximately 3.5 million residents and 25,000 police officers. In contrast, Brandenburg employees approximately 8,000 police officers, and over a much larger, largely rural, area.

[10] Many officers were adamant about their lack of concern for anonymity and that they stand behind their statements, even when such statements could be read as critical of the policing organization or local community government. In only one case was I specifically instructed not to report something, a concern that I hope is not violated when presented anonymously: officers did not want me to report that they occasionally smoked inside their assigned cars.

Administratively Brandenburg is divided into 14 counties[11] (*Landkreise*) as well as four independent cities. Policing is organized through four *Polizeidirektionen*, jurisdictional authority which in this case correspond to North, South, East, and West. The *Direktion* is responsible for logistics and planning as well as media relations and the *Kriminalpolizei*, detective units, and *Verkehrspolizei*, traffic and highway enforcement. Under each *Direktion* are several county-based *Polizeiinspektion,* 15 in total (including Potsdam)—it should be noted that this terminology is not standard throughout Germany, and that in most states this would instead refer to a local precinct or post. The *Inspektion*, typically referred to by the name of the county, is primarily responsible for day-to-day patrol and response policing, through the *Schutzpolizei*, patrol officers, specifically those in the *Wach- und Wechsel-Dienst*, essentially watch and emergency response, as well as for general crime prevention strategizing and local community policing through the *Revierpolizei.*[12] *Polizeiinspektion Falkenmark* employs approximately 150—200

[11] The term *Landkreis* is often translated instead as 'district,' including in most official translations, but the term 'county' is preferred here as it more accurately portrays the broader political and cultural relevance of the designation; *Landkreise* are the intermediate form of administrative responsibility between states (*Bundersländer*) and municipalities (*Orte*) in the Federal Republic of Germany. A significant amount of government services and administration take place at this level, and, while police are organized into agencies at the level of the *Bundesland* (e.g. *Polizei Brandenburg*) the decentralization and division of policing tends to utilize the existing jurisdiction boundaries of the Landkreis. As in the US, in more urbanized areas municipalities themselves tend to be more relevant in governance, and larger cities—four in Brandenburg—are often given a status equivalent to Landkreis, meaning that Landkreise tend to be both more often rural in nature, as the largest urban areas are excluded, and more relevant to the governance of rural or sparsely populated areas, where local municipalities are less able to provide full services. Some examples of this could be found in Falkenmark as efforts were made to expand the number of locations where residents could apply for certain types of documents (notably firearm permits), with administrators pointing out that, with the only one office in the county capital, residents could potentially have to travel up to an hour to reach the office and may require multiple visits and longer waits: administrative reform efforts and restructuring have apparently gone 'back and forth' between idealizing stronger centralization within the county and more decentralization to aid in providing easier access to citizens in more rural areas.

[12] Though the Revierpolizei are often referred to here as being a special or dedicated unit, in official police jargon they are simply a task within the Schutzpolizei while special units (*Spezialeinheiten*) refer exclusively to units operating at a level above the county including SWAT teams (SEK), mobile response teams (MEK) and various technical specialists. In everyday use, however, the Revierpolizei were set apart from 'normal' patrol units as well as from administrative units, and tended to be spoken of in similar terms whether in an office where they constituted the majority or in the *Inspektion* where they were vastly outnumbered by patrol officers and various additional units.

officers in total, making it one of the smaller county-level units. The local community officers of the Revierpolizei operate out of both the Inspektion as well as out of the *Polizeirevier,* smaller district officers with several functions, and community offices (officially referred to as '*Sprechzimmer*', i.e. meeting room[s], but colloquially simply called, for example, 'my office.') Typical for Brandenburg appears to be about 10 to 20 Revierpolizei offices per county (including the Inspektion itself, Polizeireviers, and community offices), with the 14 counties (as well as the 4 independent cities) ranging in population from around 80,000 to around 200,000. Approximately 550 officers work in the Revierpolizei throughout Brandenburg. While there is some variation—especially between urban and rural areas—a Revierpolizei officer will often be responsible for around 4,500 residents, generally covering a larger area including many villages or small towns: the rural officers who were accompanied tended to be responsible for much larger than average areas with populations close to 6,000.[13] The largest jurisdiction covered by a single officer had a population just slightly over 6,000, and had reportedly earlier been home to two Revierpolizei officers. Even during fieldwork, this was one of the areas where officers were most likely to ask for support or assistance from 'neighboring' officers.

Revierpolizei officers had ranks and status that put them within the middle of three civil service levels (*gehobener Dienst*, in between *mittlerer Dienst* and *höherer Dienst*[14]) The form of training and how it corresponds to modern ranks, however, was less important as the majority of officers had begun their career in the East German Volkspolizei—to the extent that training was brought up at all

[13] In contrast, Ohder and Schöne (2018) report approximately 200 community-contact officers in the state of Thuringia, with a population only about 10% lower than Brandenburg. Other German states tend to allocate one officer per 7,500 to 15,000 population (with urban areas fitting on the higher end), and the relatively high proportion of community-oriented officers in Brandenburg could be representative of either a higher emphasis on utilizing these officers practically or simply a function of having fewer high-density areas where one officer is responsible for upwards of 10,000 inhabitants.

[14] The lowest level in the hierarchy, *mittlerer Dienst*, includes a training program considered to be vocational training (*Ausbildung*), while *gehobener Dienst* is considered equivalent to university study, and *höherer Dienst* is essentially a graduate level study for officers who have already risen through the ranks. The term *mittlerer Dienst* is indicative that it is above a theoretical lowest level, *einfacher Dienst,* but this civil service level is not used by police anywhere in Germany, applying primarily to certain customs officers, court security personnel, bailiffs and prison guards, as well as to other non-justice agencies. Several German states have already abolished the *mittlerer Dienst*, meaning that all police officers are given the equivalent of three years' university education, though specialized for police work, and begin active service with the rank of *Polizeikommisar*.

in these cases, officers tended to emphasize the military aspects.[15] Several officers had begun with the police post-unification, typically in 1993 or 1994, some of whom had already been comparatively old (over 30 or 35) and stated that the police had been “desperate” for new recruits at the time. The general older age of most Revierpolizei officers was reflective of the overall organization, with a reported average age of officers over 45: some patrol officers were essentially ‘fresh from the academy,’ but Revierpolizei officers, as with detectives and administrators, were typically drawn from the ranks of already working officers, and some had prior experience in various other units or duties. Even in cases where new officers were taking over for retiring officers, the new officer tended to be an experienced veteran: while no set rules for applicability were ever expressed, the ideal of work seemed to suggest that officers needed to gain a significant familiarity both with police work and with the local region before even being considered for the Revierpolizei, and, conversely, younger officers—most likely working in patrol or crowd-control units—who lacked existing knowledge of the region were not expected to be interested in comparatively “boring” Revierpolizei work.

The ranks held by Revierpolizei officers spanned the entire range of the *gehobener Dienst*, from *Polizeikommisar* (PK) to *Erste Polizeihauptkommisar,* (EPHK) more likely indicating a station leader; there did not appear to be a certain and indivisible connection between rank and function in all cases, with rank appearing to serve more as a sign of seniority and ‘cooperation with the bureaucracy’[16] more than being associated with a specific function in the way that is typically seen in the US. (King 2003) The position of rank among the Revierpolizei was likely different than might otherwise be the case, as officers tended to value the independent and self-determinative aspects of their work over the institutional trappings, and rarely worked within organized squads, whereas patrol units were led by a *Dienstgruppenleiter* (DGL) and individual officers might see themselves more in competition for promotion or desired assignments.

[15] Information about training and research primarily came from (mostly unplanned) contact with current and former heads of police academies both in planning the research project and over the course of the research, but had little overlap with direct in-the-field experiences apart from helpful suggestions for background or contextualizing literature. These contacts did further illuminate the comparative openness of German policing agencies towards research (especially, though not exclusively, internally commissioned research) compared to my prior experiences in the US and that which can be inferred from the literature. (cf. Sparrow 2016)

[16] One experienced officer, outside of the Revierpolizei, often expressed pride at the fact that after over 20 years of service he was ‘still’ a PK, Polizeikommissar, having apparently been demoted more than once for unstated reasons but viewing his position as a symbol of independence or indifference towards an abstract bureaucracy.

German police officers, unlike their English-speaking counterparts, are generally addressed with *Herr* or *Frau* (i.e. Mr. or Mrs. / Ms.) rather than "Officer," "Sergeant", "Constable," etc., this is the case even with higher-level administrators; for example, the chief, with the rank of *Polizeioberrat*, was never referred to by rank, and at most was described informally or in the local media as "der Polizeichef" (lit: the police boss.) In terms of participant-observation, rank played almost no role, and was mostly practical as a way to quickly identify new individuals based only on prior knowledge or stores—but far less useful or practical than printed names.[17]

The Revierpolizei was essentially a continuation (or modernization) of the earlier Abschnittsbevollmächtiger (ABV), though that title and function was abolished after reunification and the Revierpolizei was only established in 1993. The mandate and tasks of the Revierpolizei are relatively broad, essentially invoking competing senses of the term *community policing*: policing in a way that engages, involves, and responds to the community, and simply routine performing work in a jurisdiction that corresponds to a local community. The tasks enumerated during the establishment of the role include:

1. Close contact with the public, including through public relations police work (e.g. in pre-schools, schools, and retirement homes)
2. Safety assurance for children on the way to / from school
3. Monitoring of traffic / transportation
4. Cooperation in providing statements on questions of administrative law / ordinances and matters of traffic / transportation
5. Review and reports of complaints from the populace
6. Writing up official complaints
7. Becoming informed on the phenomena of: politically motivated crime, narcotics-related crime, police-relevant youth gangs / groups

[17] The three levels of police service are designated by differing numbers of blue, silver, and gold stars—my prior experience with German police had only been in a state where the lowest level was not used, and for some time I had difficulties distinguishing between blue and silver despite the significant difference in authority or responsibility and typically in age as well. The fact that this made no noticeably significant difference, and that at no point did officers bring up the ranking system as a major topic, suggested that the meanings of rank are either (or both) taken for granted at such a basic level that even the idea of explaining it to outsiders never arises, or that the significance of additional and more immediate factors—such as position or duty—are more relevant. It should be noted that rank was not recorded systematically in field notes and was primarily documented through official sources or email signatures—the info110 (2010) article on the Revierpolizei makes it clear that some officers bear ranks from the *mittlerer Dienst* such as *Polizeihauptmeister*.

8. Conducting consultation hours for citizens
(“Vorschrift für den Wachdienst des Landes Brandenburg [PDV 350 BB]” cited in Info110 [2010], own translation)

This list of tasks essentially makes Revierpolizei officers into something like a classic image of a beat cop or small town office in the UK or US, with functions ranging from community engagement to pure traffic enforcement: it should be noted, that traffic enforcement was rarely observed, which was attributed to the fact that traffic enforcement is typically handled by a separately administered unit, though in a few cases the accompanied officer coordinated with the officers from the *Verkehrspolizei* (traffic police) or else just stopped to discuss something in particular or make small talk. Officers otherwise engage in patrol work (though it was less often discussed using the same term for ‘normal’ policing, *Streifen fahren*), investigate violations and crimes, and engage in public relations work and maintaining contact with community organizations.

Revierpolizei officer are divided into *Stadt-RePos* and *Land-RePos*, that is, city officers and country (in the sense of ‘countryside’) officers. City officers are responsible for specific districts within a city, though in practice they often partner up to work events or for certain incidents or issues, and have an easier time taking over or sharing responsibilities. City officers also spend more time on foot patrol, since they generally have beats where it is possible to cover most of the area in a reasonable amount of time. Country officers in contrast have sole jurisdiction over a larger administrative area and so more often (though not necessarily always) work alone. Their specific beat may take a variety of administrative forms[18] but

[18] The primary relevant distinctions are independent, county-level, cities (which were not included in this study), cities, townships (dt: *Amt / Ämter*, an administrative unit only used in three German states) which contain multiple, generally village-sized, towns, and towns (Gemeinde, lit. parish), which generally contained many smaller villages which are considered to be a part of the town (*Ortsteil*.) The major distinction is between city and town or township, but even minor differences that appear cosmetic may affect police cooperation with local government. Townships, for example, have a director, while their constituent communities have their own mayors and local government and often include smaller villages as Ortsteile. Towns separate from townships (Amtsfreie Gemeinden) have a mayor and possibly various *Ortsvorsteher*, essentially representatives or local leaders for a village—often, at least in the areas visited, an unpaid voluntary (“ehrenamtlich”) position. While not inconsistent with the use of the term in the US or UK, for example, this means that a Revierpolizei officer can work in one jurisdiction with approximately 5,000 residents and a single mayor, or in a similar sized and populated area represented by a director but with 6 different mayors for municipalities ranging from 100 to 2,000 residents. In practice, the local knowledge required for community policing remains just as accessible (or elusive) and the use of terminology in local government remains most problematic for outside field researchers.

will usually include over a dozen municipalities, often including a large number of villages with very low populations—in some cases officers were responsible for villages they referred to as ‘ghost towns,’ where only three or four houses were still standing and which were only used as summer homes or vacation rentals.

Contact information for officers was available online through the Polizei Brandenburg, including the full name and a picture of the officer(s), telephone and email, address of the office, and the dates and times for open consultation hours.[19] Officers considered it more useful, however, to have their information publicly and physically posted within their respective communities—apparently on their own initiative. Municipalities themselves often included specific contact information about their respective Revierpolizei officer directly on their websites—though about 1/3 of municipalities did not, and several others essentially required a dedicated search for the term “Revierpolizei” to locate the site, rather than providing a direct link from the front page. Some of these sites included the officer’s mobile phone number along their office number, and some additionally provided contextualization essentially making the point that it is acceptable to contact the officer directly, describing them, for example, as “your contact partner for any disturbances of the peace, property crime, questions of safety, and many more things.” The physical postings—put up in various locations determined by the officer, at a minimum in local government offices but often including schools as well—similarly varied in detail and style, with some essentially a print-out of the police webpage and others more ‘personalized.’

Officers themselves estimate that they spend about 70 to 80% of their time in “Außendienst,” that is, outside of the office. Time in the office is divided between

[19] A casual look into community-oriented officers in other German states shows, at least superficially, the difference in intent and emphasis: while the websites for Brandenburg seemingly emphasize the approachability of officers, most states simply provide a list of last names for officers responsible and a phone number for the station itself, rather than the officer personally, without a picture of email address. The state of Hessen provides an interesting example when one searches for “Schutzmann vor Ort” and a given municipality or city district: apart from last name and gender, no information is provided about the officer, but a significant amount of information in text and figures is provided for the jurisdiction, such as the population (more often in the tens of thousands for each officer rather than the 5,000 typical for Revierpolizei beats) and a detailed description of the demographic and cultural makeup of the area, sometimes including the number of bars, nightclubs, game halls and schools and a list of highways passing through the area. Hessen and most ‘old’ states only provide individual websites for the Polizeirevier (in this case with a position and function closer to the Polizeiinspektion in Brandenburg, i.e. a nominally independently-operating station responsible for the majority of police serviced within its jurisdiction) which includes a list, but little additional information, about local community *Polizeiposten.*

completing standard paperwork—reports of various types related to ongoing or resolved incident and 'activity reports' created as official proof of police work having been performed—meeting with residents or 'concerned citizens' and various internal meetings and obligatory activities—during fieldwork these included sessions such as firearms qualification (an all-day event taking place in another jurisdiction) and firearms checks (in which a team from outside the jurisdiction was sent and officers could only begin 'real work' once their service weapon was either certified or replaced.) Outside of the office, officers visited a wide range of locations and settings—essentially every category of 'social space' imaginable for the community was represented in some way, though not all were represented in the same way.

The offices of the local Ordnungsamt were a key location for the city officers in particular as a place to catch up on local happenings, exchange information, drink coffee, gossip, coordinate schedules, and make decisions into official reality. Country officers often found a similar form of 'allied territory' in more informal locations, such as cafes and restaurants where they could come into contact with both 'regulars' (who were considered alternatingly and sometimes simultaneously "good sources of information" and "talkers who can be safely ignored,") as well as local officials and mavens with access to key social networks, such as through volunteer fire departments or local sports teams. Other commonly visited sites included courts, the professional fire department, important cultural locations or areas that might draw in tourists (these included several renovated castles or mansions operating as hotels, museums, or restaurants as well as a marina, campgrounds, and a larger culture center with various offerings and a large stage for outdoor concerts), and the offices of local government (whether mayor, director, or another office entirely.) These sites were generally 'managed' in the sense that on-site personnel were responsible and could generally be found there, and it was with these key personnel that police officers generally remained in contact, though these visits—to the courts in particular—were often opportunities to randomly or semi-randomly run into other acquaintances and known individuals. Schools were visited often, though generally in the form of conducting specific programs, workshops, or presentations rather than in the more spontaneous manner of most other locations; some officers were more likely than others to visit the school offices simply to ask if anything is going on or to follow up on minor issues. Private companies and work locations—often including construction sites—were also often included in 'rounds,' many seemed to be longer-term follow-ups to previous, possibly recurring, incidents, but others seemed to be more along the lines of a check-in—in this capacity it is worth considering that officers are expected to make themselves publicly visible and

present, but (with many exceptions) worked day-time shifts at a time when a significant portion of the local populace would be at work, and so efforts were made to visit residents at work, particularly when the location might be considered a potential site for minor crime or mischief such as vandalism.

Other commonly visited locations were more public in nature, lacking in other obvious forms of management or 'guardianship.' These included infrastructural points such as train stations, public parks or similar areas including riverside paths, soccer fields, shopping centers or shopping streets, the areas around schools, abandoned or condemned buildings where teenagers might be known to hang out, and, depending on the time of year, entrances to trails through the woods where hunters park and congregate. In these locations the police tended to patrol on foot or simply observe the location in passing, occasionally greeting or talking with others present but, unlike in more managed locations, rarely seeking out specific individuals.

3.5.2 Town and Country: Rural Regions of Brandenburg

The study site of Falkenmark is simultaneously an administrative county (*Landkreis*) as well as a corresponding police jurisdiction (*Polizeiinspektion.*) At about 2000 square kilometers, the county is approximately ¾ the size of Rhode Island (the smallest US state by area), three times the area of New York City, and one-and-a-half times the size of London. With a population around 100,000, however, and a resulting population density between 35 and 40 individuals per square kilometer, the county demonstrates significant variation from the nationwide average of 240 individuals per square kilometer, closer to the US state of Missouri and well below the density of any county in England and most of non-Highland Scotland. In contemporary Germany, this distinction is highly significant, though it should be noted that Brandenburg overall is sparsely populated (85 inhabitants / km^2) suggesting that the state-wide organization of police is likely to take this population distribution into consideration, rather than see it as an outlier. The distribution of the population is seen as a particular challenge for policing generally and for community-oriented initiatives in particular, as police need to potentially travel long distances, quickly for emergency response, but the infrastructure and population density is not conducive to a high level of decentralization, and local communities are often small enough that organization is primarily informal with little significant opportunity for effect formal partnerships with police organizations. (cf. Feltes 2014)

Crime was certainly not non-existent, though serious violent crime in particular was rare. In 2013 and 2014 less than ten "crimes against life," which include murder but also various crimes of recklessness or negligence, were reported, with a clearance rate of 100%. Reported crimes in Falkenmark were relatively average for Brandenburg overall considering the smaller population. Direct comparisons of crime rates are, however, not useful, as much of the recorded crimes were minor incidents which, in the US, would be considered misdemeanors.[20] Recorded crimes were predominantly minor theft, with categories that could include shoplifting or minor theft: officers often presented a 'typical theft' as 'gasoline theft' or taking something from a yard, shed, garage, etc. The most typical types of thefts reported to officers and investigated during fieldwork were predominantly from businesses or construction sites, but the types of crimes reported to Revierpolizei officers are not necessarily representative of crime or conflict overall. A wide swath of crime types were either recorded or investigated by officers during fieldwork, with a much smaller number occurring during observations, with situations ranging from minor thefts, vandalism and destruction of property, assault or attempts at bodily harm (including against police officers), death threats, internet or electronic crime, and (attempted) suicide—while not technically a crime in Germany, the latter is usually treated as a police matter and one incident in which an individual was simply *believed* to have indicated suicidal intent resulted in essentially an entire shift dedicated to talking with acquaintances and searching along rivers and through woods. Consistent with media portrayals, crime was popularly (specifically outside of the police) attributed to be primarily related to foreigners—typically from Poland—but officers more often suggested it was typically local in nature, with foreigners responsible for less than 10% of total crime. Crime statistics for Brandenburg overall suggest that over half of reported offenders live in the same municipality as their reported crime, though some officers suggested that some offenders do specifically travel to different jurisdictions—a different county or state—assuming the police won't bother to follow up, but it was usually followed up with

[20] For example, in 2013 there were 197,228 crimes (*Straftaten*) recorded in Brandenburg, of which 97 were "crimes against life," and 23 of those were murder. (Land Brandenburg 2014) The US state of New Jersey, which, with a population of 9 million, is over 3.5 times the size of Brandenburg, recorded 192,971 crimes in 2013; of these, 404 were murders. (FBI 2014) While approximately 25,000 of the crimes in New Jersey were violent, only about 4,000 in Brandenburg were. Even allowing for a higher rate of violent vs. property crimes in New Jersey compared to Brandenburg, it is clear that a high proportion of reported crime in the area would be considered misdemeanors, reduced or pled out, or simply not prosecuted in the US context.

an explanation that this was less common than assumed, and that the generally effective cooperation between agencies made this “not worth the effort.”

Falkenmark contains only three municipalities designated as cities, one slightly larger than the other two though all still relatively small by city standards: all three have experienced significant decline in population, trends which have only slightly reversed in recent years. These cities also serve as the physical site of the Polizeiinspektion and the two Polizeireviere, the ‘base of operations’ for police in generally and for the local Revierpolizei officers respectively. The remainder of the country was divided into approximately ten other municipalities (several of which were *Ämter* or townships which could be further subdivided into a few dozen small towns.) Municipalities often had one ‘population center’ (usually with a population under 3,000) and several others included places with populations in the hundreds: however, these municipalities were all geographically large and even these subdivisions masked the presence of dozens of separate villages typically with populations ranging from 50 to 300. Some villages reportedly had ‘year-round’ populations of less than 10. Of the approximately 100,000 inhabitants, slightly over half live in the three cities. The area is a mixture of farmland and wooded areas, with both agriculture, as an economic factor, and hunting often cited by police and government officials as playing a major role within Falkenmark: this fact, and the general distance between ‘population centers,’ primarily gave the country its image and rural despite the majority of inhabitants living and possibly working in more urban areas. Tourism, though not seen as a major factor, was occasionally suggested as a topic that might become increasingly relevant, specifically in the context of vacation homes to rent and generally lower costs for both construction and property ownership compared to much of Germany. There was some anecdotal evidence pointed out by officers that some residents, particularly in smaller villages, were simply ‘summering’ or staying a shorter time; this was often attributed to the inheritance of houses by younger generations who had little interest in permanently relocating and expected or had difficulty in selling the house.

Significant both for the community and specifically for the organization, planning, and practice of police is the concept of ‘demographic change,’ specifically in terms of population decline. In the three decades since German (re)unification, the county has lost close to one quarter of its population, which has been attributed both by researchers and in local knowledge to low birth rates and a general exodus primarily attributed to a lack of significant local education and employment opportunities. (Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg 2019) While it is easy to overstate this—the local unemployment rate at the time of the study, at around 8%, was almost three time the national average—many of the most prominent

effects were changes or transitions rather than outright decline. Most notably was an increasing urbanization of the population, with residents leaving villages and sparsely populated areas and few moving in, though official estimates generally predict similar urban decreases in coming years. Local officials and police often attributed this transition to primarily older people moving into cities or towns to have better access to resources, medical care, general infrastructure, and to be less dependent on cars. One Revierpolizei officer simply stated that "young people are leaving, leaving dilapidated villages." Often this was considered to be, apparently from an increase in unemployment, a significant negative effect of reunification (cf. Glaeser 2000) as in the German Democratic Republic (DDR, *Deutsche Demokratische Republik*) it was stated that even most smaller villages had small shops or kiosks but today residents often need to travel significant distances to shop for groceries and basic needs. This is also reflected in the types of stores, with a high proportion of 'discount' or lower-end shops, often in shopping centers, replacing the more 'upscale' shops of pedestrian streets. (cf. Eckert and Willisch 2012) Anecdotally, one officer suggested that while in many places Internet technology has brought some benefits—i.e. in the availability of services and ability to order products online—locals, particularly older people, have had a hard time adapting or simply have not made an attempt, and still prefer to visit and speak in person, but are increasingly unable to do so while living in villages.[21]

In terms of images and first impressions, there seemed to be visible evidence to produce plausible narratives of both change and decline. In an impressionistic ethnographic sense (cf. Van Maanen 1988), visiting the area reminded me more of familiar post-industrial areas of the US—New Jersey or eastern Pennsylvania—more than the parts of Germany I was already familiar with. While the prevalence of abandoned or run-downed buildings is often used to symbolize

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[21] This was framed as part of a larger explanation of societal changes. An officer described a long-term case in which a local resident had been accused and investigated for online fraud—fraudulently selling products which were never delivered. Despite dozens of ostensibly legitimate complaints, the local prosecutor claimed there was "no risk of repetition," and declined to bring charges. The officer saw this as a general cultural reluctance to adapt to new technologies or to try to understand them, and speculated that many in the police and prosecutor's office saw some victims of computer crimes as deserving: this not an otherwise widely pronounced view by accompanied officers, however, and email scams and 'phishing' were described as concerns by some officers and in a few cases investigated and recorded during fieldwork. The officer making these statements considered himself to be rather tech-averse, and—in this case similar to most Revierpolizei officers—preferred to work through word-of-mouth, face-to-face contract, or over the phone than primarily through incident reports and postings on the internal computer system.

the economic ‘failures’ of the East (cf. Haese and Lantermann 2012) it was common to encounter condemned or simply vacant buildings directly across the street from new ‘suburban’ housing developments. Many storefronts had been closed or had ‘for sale’ signs, but recently opened stores and restaurants could easily be found as well. While the region overall experienced a population decline, the (few) cities experienced slight increases, but, as stated, largely reflected in new construction, with some city blocks resembling ghost towns.

Despite the area being overwhelmingly rural by every measure—including economically—slightly over half of the population lived in the three largest municipalities which, while still small by city standards, were decidedly more urban in character. This was reflected in the division of the Revierpolizei as well, with about half of all officers responsible for city districts and the other half for rural townships or geographically-large towns. Even more residents reportedly worked in the cities, often with longer commutes: infrastructural challenges were presented in the lack of significant highways, with the patrolling of two-lane county roads and concerns about truck traffic playing a major role both in the practice and the discourse of policing locally. Car accidents, including fatal accidents, often were attributed to long-distance truck drivers who “shouldn’t be here at all,” according to some officers. Tragic events such as car accidents often were used as a moral lens to propel narratives about how ‘things should work,’ and the case of accidents where drivers simply ‘passing through’ could be held responsible formed a key issue where insiders—locals or the broader community—could be rhetorically defended against potentially reckless, if not quite hostile, outsiders.

Travel by car was a necessity in most places—country officers typically were responsible for an area that could not thoroughly be patrolled in one shift, and as a result often needed to expend more effort in scheduling appointments and planning visits to avoid spending an inordinate amount of time in transit. This was a cultural factor as well as practical and infrastructural: pre-unification, in the DDR, car ownership was rare, with waiting lists famously lasting up to or over a decade (Glaeser 2000), and this lack of effective ‘independent’ transportation had supposedly been reflected in a more decentralized economic infrastructure, such as a higher incidence of local shops in villages and non-urban areas compared to the situation today. Relatedly, motorcycle or motorscooter ownership was higher, as these were more easily accessible and affordable, and is reflected today in a prominent local motorcycle culture, both in organized ‘weekend rider’ groups and as private interest or hobby. Many of the accompanied officers were motorcycle owners and/or enthusiasts and shared a sympathy for other motorcyclists—sometimes describing it as “typically Eastern”—but also expressing concern for the

danger and risk of serious or fatal accidents, particularly among younger or untrained riders: this was often narratively coupled with the overall danger of private transportation and the contemporary need for longer-distance commuting.

While in the more rural areas locations were spatially separate and almost always required a car to travel ‘from scene to scene,’ this was sometimes the case in the urban areas as well (in the largest city in particular), as the forms of public life were not always seen as conducive or relevant to the realities of police foot patrol. Patrolling or traveling by foot was presented—as it often is in the community policing literature (Pate and Skogan 1985, Kelling and Coles 1996)—as a preferable way to maintain a non-threatening but effective public presence and better engage with the community, but also weighed against the benefits of having access to a police van and the included resources (including space for private discussion) and the various downsides of actual foot patrol, such as the distances between locations worth visiting from a police perspective. The choice of walking or driving, for city officers, often appeared to be more of a personal preference, sometimes simply weather-dependent, rather than strategic, as walking the streets was not reliably an effective way to encounter the community. Foot patrol was more often used at specific locations, such as parks or shopping areas, rather than between locations.

Also reflected in the demographic change was the fact that the population was significantly older than would be expected—this was reflected in observations and encounters, with almost no police encounters involving individuals presumed to be between 20 and 30 years old occurring at any point during the fieldwork. Statistically, about 13% of residents are under 18, while over 75% are over 30, with a full quarter of the local population over 65. (Land Brandenburg 2014, Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg 2019) This further lent to a fractured view of the character of the region—at least from my perspective—as while many areas appeared characteristically “German” and urban in nature, with major pedestrian shopping streets, parks, and cities clearly intended for foot traffic rather than automobiles (cf. Jacobs 1961) cultural expression in public took different forms—i.e. in the sense that the cultural symbols of youth and even forms such as a graffiti were less visible—and the types of public events offered, while still significant in number, tended to be more ‘general audience’ events rather than specialized cultural offerings. Venues likely to skew younger, such as nightclubs, dance halls, or certain types of bars, were rare, but other types of cultural ‘infrastructural centers’ (cf. Barlösius and Spohr 2017) such as cafes, restaurants, and especially ‘canteen style’ restaurants were not only common but often populated by large groups of regulars. Most significant events and encounters involving younger people or youth (outside of visits to schools) involved local village events, such as annual

village festivals or, more often, volunteer fire department events: it should, however, be noted that the events attended by Revierpolizei officers better represent the priorities, interest, and knowledge of the specific officer rather than reflect the realities of village life. It was significant, though, which types of events and locations the officers considered central or key in establishing themselves within a community, and these places tended to represent the demographics of the region and municipalities as described.

In many ways the urban areas fit the description by Bude (2012) of an "Anti-Ghetto," where "not the appearances, but the *retreats* define the public image." (16, own translation) Cultural life was, for better or worse, generally perceived and described as predictable. Individuals often brought up their perceived frustrations and the broader narrative of decline, though rarely defining specific problems—at least not problems that could be immediately dealt with by the police or other organizations. These narratives emphasized the lack of opportunities, at least from the perspective of young people or those finishing school, suggesting that those who leave wouldn't want to come back. While not all characterizations were negative, and few were *consistently* negatively, they generally reflected the idea of a different pace of life and the lack of significant expectations, contrasting this with the perceived values of young people who value action and excitement. (cf. Goffman 1967) This was even seen in the narratives of police work: I was told that while many officers were close to retirement, and despite overall reductions in the number of planned positions, it was difficult to find enough suitable young(er) officers as most early-career or out-of-the-academy officers were more interested in a "more exciting" assignment in the cities of Potsdam or Brandenburg an der Havel. Officers themselves tended to speak more positively of the region but often based on personal experience, with one officer directly stating "if you weren't from here, you wouldn't want to work here." He implied that the pace of life and the type of work was preferable and more rewarding than that which one might find in the inner city, but could understand why new officers would find it 'boring.' A convergence of disparate narratives was clear in how negative elements of social life—economic disadvantage, lack of positive future expectations—could be reconciled with social-world (notably, the local world of policing) which valued stability, predictability, and personal connections.

Community partnerships could be seen as a synthesis of organizational and personal levels of communication and interaction in many ways. (cf. Ohder and Schöne 2018) Community groups, public organizations, and initiatives were prominent within the community but connections between police and community were most present through direct personal connections, which could be

done through organizational representatives or leaders but was also manifested through pre-existing relationships between officers and individuals who *happened* to have an organizational or community affiliation. Some community groups—both official groups and informal collections of 'concerned locals,' 'café regulars' or 'busybodies'—were treated openly with respect and concern but afterwards described as individuals who can "safely be ignored." The division between the symbolic and instrumental functions of community-oriented policing became clear here, in some cases signifying that problems might not arise spontaneously but rather as a function of 'concerned citizens' problematizing something and creating a conflict, whereas simply listening to their concerns and negotiating might avoid even the perception of a problem: this was sometimes reflected in a more clichéd "village mentality" where newcomers (in some case even after years of local residency) were considered suspicious by some residents and, in the most extreme cases, accused by residents for every unexplained occurrence. (cf. Geertz 1973) By promising to 'keep an eye out' officers could essentially remove the responsibility or ownership of the 'problem' from the complaining resident and would likely find no legitimate or convincing ground for further official action.

In comparison to a great deal of research on community policing (and personal experience), churches and organized religion seemed to play a very reduced role in the community, at least in the perspective of the police, and essentially zero role in terms of police-community relations. The only notable events involving religious communities at all involved Christmas concerts where I encountered (off-duty) officials and administrators, but church leaders were never observed to be directly involved in any obvious police-community partnerships. Whether this is simply an oversight based on missing observations, an attempt by the police to avoid a potentially controversial framing, or a result of the general lower levels of religious belief and church participation is difficult to determine (about 80% of Brandenburg residents are not registered with any church compared to 28% nationwide, and surveys have often shown a lack of religious belief among young people in particular, with Peter Thompson (2012), writing in The Guardian, referring to East Germany as "the most godless place on earth"); this played little role within the ethnographic fieldwork as the topic simply did not come up and only became noticeable in comparison to the (primarily US-oriented) literature. (cf. Winship and Berrien 1999) A handful of off-hand comments may speak to a generalized community orientation but arguably should not be given much weight. The German word "Heide" can refer both to heather or moorland, and is often used in local place names or designations of farmland, but the term can also mean *pagan* or *heathen.* As Brandenburg was one of the last parts of contemporary German to be fully Christianized (in the 12th Century as part of

the early Northern Crusades), on more than one occasion an officer half-jokingly pointed out signs or names using the word "Heide," mentioned the comparatively late Christianization of the region or local history generally, and commented along the lines of, "we're all still heathens here."

The elements that held the region together, both from the frames offered by the policing organization and the narratives of individual officers, as well as that reflected in the community itself broadly, seemed more about a shared narrative and common problems—both in terms of social change as well as in persistent identified risks including flooding. In the simplest sense, the shared values—though often emphasizing frustration or reflecting negative associations—formed a type of solidarity which police work, especially its more informal incarnations, attempted to reinforce and utilize. Observed encountered and settings were often divisible into 'scenes,' with distinct divisions—typically the simple act of traveling by car to a new location—and obvious symbols of "the community" as a whole were not obvious, but the narrative refrain of community concern and values seemed to guide a great deal of observed action, and the work of police officers seemed geared around maintain the idea that there was a shared community. (cf. Anderson 1991) While this study was rather an exploration of police work *within a context* than an exploration of that context itself, it was quickly clear that the context both defined and reflected the presentation and dramaturgic role of the police in society: as this connection was perceived dramaturgically, it is intentional that the analysis of the context is less empirical or based on outside measurements and more impressionistic, with an understanding of the characteristics and critical elements of the region and local communities based on experiences, observations, anecdotes, stories, and that which was offered by the cultures approached through participant-observation.

3.5.3 Protocol: Field Research

Police officers from the Revierpolizei in Falkenmark were accompanied on their shifts recurring over a period of one-and-a-half years (with additional observations beyond that.) Field stays were typically one or two weeks per month, during which time one officer would be consistently accompanied, though this was not always possible and many adjustments were made to the schedule to accommodate the work to be done, public events which involved evening or weekend shifts, vacations and sick days, etc. Participant observation was conducted in 19 Revierpolizei jurisdictions or beats—because of personnel changes some beats included different or multiple officers, such as due to someone covering a shift, retirement,

or an officer transferring to a different district. In some cases, the same officer was only accompanied on-duty for two to four shifts, while others were accompanied for (non-consecutive) weeks—many others, particularly the station ‘chiefs’ were in contact and available for unstructured interviews during or after fieldwork with other officers and were primarily involved this way (though all station chiefs were also accompanied ‘in the field’ several times as well.) Half (9) of the accompanied officers were assigned to city districts, though more ‘unassigned’ time was spent there conducting interviews or with general discussions, as country officers generally have less accessible offices and spend more of their shift traveling by car, meaning that I generally began these shift from the respective Polizeirevier or, in some cases when it was more convenient, being picked up directly (in some cases, particularly when officers live in the communities they police, the distance between the Polizeirevier and the assigned jurisdiction is significant enough that officers have permission to keep their weapon and car at home, rather than spend upwards of 90 minutes commuting to a station and then back to their district.)

Exceptions to planned routines were made in cases that were considered (by me, but often presented by the police as potentially useful) to break the routine—this particularly included public events or the opening of a Christmas Market, where multiple officers would be on-duty, as well as training or inspection; for example, firearms certification was conducted over several days in one week, and in that week I attended with different groups of officers. Additional observations were made with several units outside of the Revierpolizei, some of whom were organized at a different administration level, but in most cases the officers working there had prior experience within the Revierpolizei (which was my reason for being there) and the observations were still enlightening: this included two days spent patrolling in a boat with the *Wasserschutzpolizei*, the marine police, as one officer had previously worked in the Revierpolizei. Qualitative data was drawn from all observations, recorded either immediately or whenever possible in fieldnotes and then transcribed or reconstructed at the end of the shift or event. Attempts were made in going back to the ‘raw’ field notes to reconcile presumed or already known background information with ‘pure’ observations (cf. Wolfinger 2002)—a complicated task to separate, especially with the consideration that a great deal of Revierpolizei work looks unlike either American policing or urban German policing, two forms with which I was much more familiar, and that fact that many interactions were so dependent on prior knowledge (unknown to me) and were further explained or contextualized by officers post hoc, essentially leaving two ways to interpret the field notes: as a raw experienced or observed situation with no ‘anchored’ meaning, or as an interaction guided (but not solely interpreted) by the narrative explanation given.

No audio recordings were made at any point with the assumption that this would fundamentally alter the nature of interactions if done overtly: as a result, quotations from officers are approximated or reconstructed based on the notes but may not always be word-for-word accurate. Additionally, as all interactions, discussions and interviews were in German, statements were translated into English: in doing so every attempt has been made to convey the spirit, rather than the technical accuracy, of the original statement within the communicative context, and where the use of specific jargon or terminology appeared significant or difficult to convey simply it has been indicated in a footnote—for example, in the US the use of the term 'cop' internally by police is normal, but the closest German equivalent of this in terms of slang, 'Bulle,' would be considered more derogatory and provocative—the more common internal terms for police in Germany, 'Beamte' or 'Kollege,' refer respectively to a civil servant or to a colleague or co-worker. These terms may convey additional meaning, but as they are also essentially standard terminology, 'over-accurately' translating them into English may convey meaning that is not intended or only significant against a broader cultural background. The Revierpolizei is referred to here as a 'unit,' though practically it was more of a role or designation for individual officers and was referred to collectively as "the Revierpolizei" but never specifically as a "unit." Officers working within the Revierpolizei are generally and generically referred to as 'Revierpolizei officers' here for the purposes of clarity, though within Brandenburg they are more parsimoniously referred to as "Revierpolizist" or "Revierpolizistin" (the second case indicating female gendering) or colloquially as "RePo": the availability of a short, simple term to refer to these officers apart from the comparatively clunky "community-oriented police officer" or other similar terms likely plays some part in making this policing role essentially a household name locally, and this cannot easily be conveyed in translation. In the same way, the previous term "Abschnittsbevollmächtiger" was almost exclusively referred to as "ABV" (the full term only given when explaining the term itself or in an ironic manner) and was often used interchangeably with "RePo" in ways in which the distinction did not matter. (A similar phenomenon can be found in the recurring use of "Mark" referring to the currency existing prior to the introduction of the Euro in 1999—in some cases it could be an indicator that the story being told took place in the past and in other cases the terms were simply being used synonymously despite technically referring to distinct things existing in mutually exclusive contexts.)

The use of terminology is more problematic in referring to the presence and role of non-police individuals within encounters. The term 'citizen' is primarily used here, cognate to the German term "Bürger" which is widely used and often

intended to refer to *anyone* police come into contact with, regardless of citizenship. (Ley 2013) Similarly, the term 'resident' is similarly used, cognate to the German "Einwohner" which can refer more specifically to a police-involved individual during an encounter at that individual's residence, to a member of the local community (potentially in contrast to outsiders or non-residents, for example, tourists or visitors to a festival), or simply be used generically and interchangeably with 'citizen.' The everyday speech of officers tended to differ greatly from the more formal bureaucratic language or that reflected in the more technical German policing literature (i.e. that used in academy training or described as "Kriminologie"), with words such as "suspect" ("Verdächtiger") or "offender" ("Täter") rarely being used in observed encounters or narratives in place of more everyday formulations, along the lines of "the guy who did it," though the term for victim ("Opfer") did play a more significant narrative role. The literature often uses the term "polizeiliches Gegenüber," (Frevel 2015) conveying something like "the police counterpart" to refer to any form of interaction partner: this term was never encounter outside of one or two ironic uses, and despite its potential effectiveness at adequately conveying the idea of a non-police actor in a police encounter it is avoided due to too closely resembling an institutional frame for pre-structuring or pre-coding interactions.

3.5.4 Sources of Data

Overall, data was primarily generated from three sources / settings:

1) Direct observations of police-citizen encounters and interactions
2) Narrative descriptions provided by accompanied police officers or others in the field
3) Descriptions and explanations provided by police officers, administrators and other 'key informants' in formal or informal settings

These sources demonstrated a great deal of overlap and the data generated is at times used interchangeably. This distinction was primarily important due to the fact that citizen encounters were often obviously embedded in larger interactions which could only be recounted from specific perspectives—the contextualizing narratives were useful for interpreting the deeper meanings behind gestures, speech, and action generally within interactions but were also interpretable in their own rights both as front stage presentations (cf. Richardson 1990)—of how police officers justify and present their own actions—and as more relaxed

backstage presentations—how officers categorize and narratively frame various elements of their work, the community, and human interaction. Dividing encounters into analyzable segments or units could prove difficult even with narrative contextualization—while many encounters were clearly formalized and involved a stated policing goal, such as in responding to a complaint, a great deal of interaction between police and citizens was semi-formal or informal but still involved discussions of relevant matters, such as making small talk with locals in a café who provide information about ongoing concerns. The simplest interactions still bore relevance, at least in a symbolic manner, such as in cases where police officers would wave to passing motorists or pedestrians—the individual might be an off-duty police officer, neighbor, spouse of a co-worker, someone known from a community group or formal organization, someone who has been in contact with the officer to express concerns, or someone who is 'known to the police' for having been in trouble previously. These micro-interactions still firmly belong to the observed world of policing, and understanding them requires a hermeneutic approach at essentially two levels: it is necessary to understand the basic 'rules' (in this case likely unknown to the officer him/herself) governing when the officer greets an individual without initiating a deeper encounter, and it is necessary to understand the relationship the specific individuals have to the officer (i.e. how their social role and meaning is being constructed.) In a deeper sense, these types of actions reflected the basic construction of the community, of the establishment of 'insiders' even if no outsiders were actively indicated, though to the officers themselves this need not be overt and is likely more reflexive and simply a part of everyday life. Exploring the difference between formalized encounters—those in which every participant expresses awareness of what is going on and more-or-less recognizes (if not accepts) the institutional perspective of policing and its demands and concerns—and informal interactions proved to be key to understanding the practical role of community police officers in the specific setting.

The narratives used by police were relevant both as accounts of personal or communicated experience but also as representations of learning processes and models of sharing those experiences. Often the fit between policing values and community values can be observed heuristically based on the terminology officers used in various settings and the extent to which this terminology reflects or guides action. For example, Van Maanen (1978) found that, for the police he examined, citizens were in most cases relegated to the role of 'know-nothing' or 'asshole' with little opportunity for citizens to provide information that the police would value short of a confession. In contrast, in the present case there

was a marked distinction between abstract stories of crime, lacking in identifiable local elements, and richer narratives which, while often stopping short of defending criminal acts, emphasized broader contexts and maintained a separation between the act and the individual who committed it. Additionally, narratives shared by fellow officers, officials, and local 'contacts' were a major source of local knowledge in a more general sense to provide meaning and context (e.g. an officer learning and accepting that a certain bar has a bad reputation or that a 'eccentric' local man is generally considered kind-hearted and trustworthy by the local community) as well as to learn and identify patterns for emerging issues that need to be dealt with: unlike the more typical or traditional filtering of incidents and calls for service through emergency responses and dispatchers, many observed and handled issues began essentially as rumors or vague stories from officials or residents which were then followed up on by officers, often over a longer period of time, with efforts made to both establish a more 'workable' narrative understanding and to manage the connection of the issue to the police, the presumption being that not all issues required an active police intervention as long as the officer can contextualize and keep track of the problematic elements. Tsoukas (1996) states that, "individual knowledge is possible precisely because of the social practices within which individuals engage—the two are mutually defined." (14) In this, the construction of individual knowledge, which in turn became a resource of symbol of expertise, was undertaken through a variety of social practices within different arenas, such as the broader police culture, the community as a general setting, and against a variety of perspectives and frameworks either shared, semi-trusted, or simply taken as a source for 'raw data' for police—for example, in the stories of 'bar regulars' who are mostly "safely ignored" the police still recognized narrative elements which they then reinterpreted in a way which let them better contextualize the information. Working with stories was not just a way for police to identify problems, however, but it was also a key part of image work and maintaining the desired relationship with the community, with police needing to narratively position themselves in others in ways that did not rely on (de-personalizing) policing or legal terms.

In an ethnographic sense, attempts were made to approach the police organization, police culture, and police work in a broader (quasi-holistic) sense. The major focus—both by design and by organizational constraint—was on accompanying and observing officers on-duty, but the entire project involved a significant deal of necessary contact with administrators and officers in the Revierpolizei and those with different or additional duties. Perspective was provided by representatives of other agencies, particularly the Ordnungsamt in various municipalities, as well as employees or officials from local governments, fire departments, refugee homes,

nursing homes, and restaurants in regards to the problems that concern them and their interactions with the police. A significant amount of time was spent with police officials and administrators both in planning and carrying out research—e.g. in learning the lay of the land and understanding the basic structure and organization of policing in Brandenburg—and later on in a more informal way—I was often invited to private events, and several times to an informal monthly meeting involving the police chief, the former chief and representatives from various government and private organizations in the fields of health and safety. Private events in particular often become storytelling sessions, with officers and administrators reminiscing, many of the stories involving policing in pre-unification East Germany. In this way, information was collected both on specific incidents or anecdotes as well as general perspectives on the local community and the changes it has experienced over the past 30 or 40 years. Entering into the 'home life' of officers, though only a minor component of the overall fieldwork, was key to breaking out of a dichotomy of the 'pure' outsider perspective which I brought to the field and the institutional perspective inherent in the bureaucratic trappings of the job—it was important to experience how police officers live and talk about their community when they aren't on the clock. As most officers lived in, or at least near, the neighborhoods they policed, this also often worked as a good introduction into many aspects of community life that could not simply be entered into as, essentially, a tourist to that social world.

3.6 The Drama of Policing: Dramaturgy, Narrative, and Hermeneutics

Viewing interaction from a dramaturgic, humanistic, perspective is a hermeneutic process that involves "'seeing' human action as creating meanings that can be understood 'as if' they were literary texts—embodying metaphorical, poetic, and symbolic meanings." (Gusfield 2003: 125) The primary focus of the dramaturgical view is centered around the performance and the basic assumption that actors in that performance will attempt to cast themselves in the best light—negotiating, managing, recasting themselves or even pleading to alter possible perceptions. These negotiations are performative and symbolic and certainly constituted through existing, perceived, and evolving power dynamics, though the façade of the performance can often mask the naked exercise of power more commonly depicted in political economy (see also Strauss 1978.) Actors who find their attempts to make serious, bold statements met with ridicule may accept the proffered role as a comedian and even mold that role into one of social critic,

maintaining a respected status despite the rejection of their initial performance. (cf. Goffman 1959, 1961) Dramaturgy is essentially a vocabulary of metaphors of theater, of performance, which can be applied to individual interactions, social movements, and image work at all levels. The questions of how and in which way these metaphors can be applied are (ideally) conceptually useful in exploring the nature of interactions between fully deterministic or ritual encounters and uninterpretable chaos. Discarding assumptions that all actions, gestures, utterances, threats of violence, apologies, etc. must be purely functional allows room for these events to have symbolic meaning, either communicating to other participants (actors), to a varyingly engaged audience, or directly to the self-identity of the performer. (Flick 2007) The language of drama is one of metaphor, in which the *true* nature of a phenomenon must not be fully understood in order to be incorporated into a story, but rather, as in symbolic interactionism, the meaning understood within the scene is that which can further the story and from which actors take their cues. When we address US police officers with, "Officer," or use the formal tense while speaking with German police officers, we may not be consciously imagining the on-going interpretation in the officer's mind and considering how our use of vocabulary affects the other's perception of us, but we do so *because this is done*: this is the script that is being followed, and while this is not to imply that no deeper meaning lies behind this (as it certainly does) the fact that established forms can be created to give continuity to disparate and unique situations is reason enough for us to explore how these taken-for-granted constructs and ideal types are used as part of a performance.

Dramaturgy is particularly relevant to the practice and institution of policing. Policing has shrouded itself in the mantle of crime control and risk prevention, despite the realization that much of what police do only incidentally involves law enforcement (Bittner 1970) and the difficulties and bureaucratic contradictions created by the institutional demands to demonstrate effectiveness. (Sparrow 2016) The selected case, as with many rural or small-town jurisdictions, further challenges this as effectively presenting crime as the *sole* or even primary police preoccupation would be, to put it simply, a challenge. (cf. Kröhnert and Lindner 2009) Rural policing in particular has for this reason often been considered to emphasize peacekeeping and general stability over the production and defense of bureaucratic realities. (Banton 1964, Young 1993) The institution of policing in these settings is more constrained in terms of establishing its own separate life-world in which the institution itself defines which people, places, and things are problematic and must be dealt with, as well as *how* those problems are dealt with. (cf. Manning 2003) Yet even in 'normal' police settings (that is, the urban departments which are overrepresented in the literature and media), the conflicts

over police interpretations of situations and alternative perspectives within the community (ranging from everyday ‘common sense’ interpretations to medical, psychiatric, or religious perspectives on conflict, deviance, and problem-solving) cannot be simply handled through case-by-case processing: the police are bound to the images they reflect, and have themselves long recognized the need to manage those images. (Strecher 1971, Manning 1988)

Returning to the case at hand, the institutional level of policing—represented by the use of formal public messaging, organizational structuring, and the establishment of formal policies, commissions, and programs (cf. Crank 2003, Mensching 2007)—faces the challenge of reconciling the vision of policing inherited through institutional constraints, bureaucratic necessities, demand conditions, and available resources and measures with a portrait of openness, responsiveness, and concern for not just the concerns of the community but for the very existence of an entity that can be defined as such. Police in Germany, paralleling developments in most Western countries, have developed from a more state-centric *purely* institutional model to one more concerned with public perceptions and the rights of citizens, with public safety generally touted over criminal punishment as a core goal. (Kreissl 2008, Dübbers 2015) One of the most visible manifestations of this is the creation (or, more accurately, continuation) of the Revierpolizei and the reliance upon them as a principle element of policing, rather than a supplement or ‘token’ unit, and the related establishment of community partnership. The mandate of the Revierpolizei itself reflects a dramatization of what policing is, exemplified for example in the emphasis on cooperation with schools and the safety of children going to or leaving school: using the vocabulary of social problems, this is a “valence issue,” (Nelson 1984, Gusfield 1989) in contrast to a position issue, which can effectively be presented in terms of consensus and in terms of social or community values without the need to even acknowledge or consider any organized opposition.

Organizing efforts around valence issues—and taking efforts to ensure the continuing perceived valence of these issues—is one visible form of image work that maintains a connection between police and community and downplays the potential for conflict. Emphasizing prevention and public safety, and particularly public safety for children, can both frame the police as not actively against any segment of society and also allow for a narrative where ‘nothing happening’ is still seen as a success. Rather than having to outright become “moral entrepreneurs” (Becker 1963) providing new frames of morality or community values or relying on their presumed expertise in recognizing developing problems, police can combine the organization of everyday work and image work by emphasizing and communicating a focus on pre-defined problems and similar valence issues where no

community opposition is expected. (cf. Ericson and Doyle 2003) This is similar to the arguments of Bittner (1970) and Manning (2003) that the dramaturgical focus of the police institution has been on law enforcement precisely because this confers a stronger idea of legitimacy and avoids the need for police to morally or situationally justify their decision-making: crime is by the general definition (in play here) an act against society, even if maintaining this positioning requires a great degree of selectivity in who is treated as a criminal (as well as when and where.)

Police often demonstrated a sense of role conflict in needing to carry out their work, particularly in contexts where they developed sympathetic narratives of acts or individuals which from an institutional context were criminals or offenders, but from other perspectives (within the community) may be seen differently. (cf. Johnson 1970, Regoli and Poole 1980) One officer described investigating a potential arson where it was found that the owner was responsible, concluding the story with, "the man didn't have any money… maybe I shouldn't have done it," referring to his own actions leading up to the man's arrest. While this demonstrated sympathy with the key actor in the story, the sympathy shown in the narrative was not presented as a challenge to the institutional ideals of the police. In a way, the individual was a victim of circumstances but not 'the opposition': other issues, particularly drugs or alcohol-related issues, are framed as supported by interest groups who are unlikely to change their values or norms, and, as a result, efforts might instead focus on making compromises in terms of what behavior is considered acceptable in public (if well concealed or not provocative, etc.)

In the same way, police can provide legitimacy for activities, events and settings which are essentially already legitimate within society, and undercut possible expectations that the police are trying to 'ruin a good time' or put people on edge. By policing public events in more participatory, non-adversarial, ways police officers (as well as the larger organization) can present themselves as supporting—whether tacitly or officially- what is going on. In the present case this primarily involved attending events and settings such as the annual and traditional Christmas Market, 'classic car' shows, parades, fairs and festivals, and sporting events: as will be explored in the next chapter, this further required the manipulation and management of the 'expected' police role to allow for a more participatory engagement—both fulfilling the demands of policing, as a process, and maintaining more than tacit membership within the 'mainstream' community. Some events—notably an electronic music festival and a nationalist march—were more obviously treated as 'outside' the core community, either due to primarily drawing a crowd from outside the region or for being too far outside

the mainstream, and policed not through participation but rather through external control and the establishment of fixed boundaries, e.g. in setting up checkpoints to inspect cars entering the area. The institutional and organizational demands for police officers to establish themselves some way within society have often been overlooked (Banton 1964 provides an early and illustrative example) and in the present case, though these demands were rarely explicit, they were firmly seen as part of the job, and a desirable one at that: officers wanted to police a community in which they had some stake.

The involvement of the community was present in encounters more often than not. This reflected a typical 'ethnographer's dilemma' as, especially early on, many interactions were either essentially indecipherable or only interpretable in terms of broad strokes and clear outcomes. In contrast to a great deal of the urban-centric ethnographic literature, encounters tended to be approached by participants (police and residents) as taking place within a larger temporal framework—i.e. fewer people were complete strangers to police, and most encounters involved elements—utterances, references, symbols, or even the stated or unstated purpose of the encounter itself—which had earlier histories and needed to be understood in some way in order to 'follow the action.' At the same time, overly depending on officers to explain their actions and decision making seemed to violate the spirit of an ethnographic approach, and this led to the realization that how police talk about what they do is crucial, separately from what they do or how they do it.

3.6.1 In their Own Words: Role and Identity

The Brandenburg Police newsletter "info110" describes the Revierpolizei officer as "seismograph, mediator and problem-solver in uniform." (2010: 15) Revierpolizei officers could be considered as 'specialized generalists' as they are intended to not only work in a specific but broadly defined jurisdiction (i.e. being solely responsible for a variety of tasks in a geographically large area and 'the community' in general) but also with a vaguely defined mandate that clearly differs from a more institutionalist view emphasizing enforcement or measurement, but one that is also intended to be more practical and functional, in terms of replacing or at least supplementing standard patrol policing, than purely symbolic. Lehmann (2010) emphasizes the fact that the actual practices of the Revierpolizei vary somewhat from official designations and also recounts the concerns of officers that bureaucratic interference will hinder, constrain, or undermine their work

in terms of community relations. In describing their job, officers often distinguished “Revierpolizei work” from other required tasks, with Revierpolizei work covering general, often long term, efforts to “maintain contact” and “keep a positive relationship” and other work including more formalized policing tasks such as traffic control, inspections of various kinds (such as residency checks), and responding to accidents or emergencies. Semi-formalized tasks such as ‘providing advice,’ particularly to schoolchildren or to seniors were ‘core tasks’ for some officers but only tertiary to others, more relevant to the ‘prevention’ unit (where, significantly, some of the officers who most valued these tasks had previous experience.) Generally, though, the core of Revierpolizei work was consistently presented as the idea of “making oneself available,” both by being known and present in the community and by being physically contactable and reachable (with several officers claiming to never turn off their work phone or to regularly give out their private number), and then following up with the resulting expectations from community members. Though it might not be the ‘typical’ start of a case or encounter, ‘cold calls’ where someone who was not closely acquainted with the officer simply called the officer’s mobile phone to discuss a problem or arrange a meeting did occur, confirming this image of ‘availability’ presented by officers. The self-image of community-oriented officers presented in the literature has been generally consistent with that reflected in the fieldwork, though it should be noted that little research has been done to date specifically on community-oriented officers in Germany, and that the extant research primarily has, as in the present case, focused on rural areas where extra weight appears to be given to those units as the major face of policing.

Ohder and Schöne (2018), in their study of the Bürgerpolizei in Sachsen, note that, “in stark contrast to the tendency towards anonymization among police officers… community-oriented officers are properly personalized.” (150—151, own translation) This proved to be a major component of the Revierpolizei both in terms of identity and in the development of individual encounters. Personalization took place on two conceptual levels, both of which were of relevance though varying case-by-case: inside the role of the police officer, and outside that role as a private citizen. These levels very roughly correspond to the dramatization of policing authority (further explored in the following chapter) through *personal* and *situational* frames, respectively. Many officers in Falkenmark were local to the area, especially within the Revierpolizei, and so were already known to neighbors, friends, family etc. as private individuals, and were therefore concerned with their reputation as well as with the local community broadly. (cf. Banton 1964) Officers, however, saw a significant component of their job simply as establishing themselves within their given community, regardless of their

previous relationship to that community generally or in specific contexts, with most officers stating at some point that it required years to establish oneself as reliable and trustworthy: one officer specifically stated that "it takes at least two years before you can really do anything as a police officer." Establishing oneself, as a process, consisted both of deciphering formal as well as informal community and social networks—country officers often were responsible for 20 to 40 distinct municipalities or villages with their own representatives and local organizations, and simply keeping track of who was responsible for various tasks and geographic areas could require significant effort—as well as gaining the trust of key individuals and the community in a more general sense.

The experiences and backgrounds of the involved officers varied, though attitudes towards the work were broadly similar; major distinctions or dissimilarities are indicated, but as noted, were generally rare, with more observable differences between officers in other units and the Revierpolizei than within the Revierpolizei itself. Many officers commented on this in particular, emphasizing that, though each officer likely has his or her own preferred 'style,' being a Revierpolizei officer requires a belief in the idea of communication and negotiation rather than a strict black-and-white worldview, as well as the ability to know when to be 'relaxed,' (*lässig*) but also when to become strict (*streng).* This specific formulation came up regularly: *remaining relaxed* and, when necessary, *becoming strict.* One former Revierpolizei officer had been transferred out of the unit, and, although the specific details were not indicated, it was suggested by other officers in the unit that "he is a good cop, but he couldn't talk to people the way that you need to." It was clear through many other statements that the 'needed' way to talk to people was not a specific method or approach, but rather emphasized the idea that the officer simply needed to have an approach at all, essentially that the officer needed to maintain control—through dramaturgical practices and impression management—even in situations involving discretion and the relinquishing of formal control.

Officers tended to be older, though this was also reflective of the overall average age in Falkenmark, and this also translated into most officers having a great deal of experience within and without the Revierpolizei. Officer Karsten had begun as an ABV officer prior to unification, and claims to have been the oldest officer to 'survive' reunification, with most over 30 being let go or deemed ineligible.[22] He was already eligible for retirement as I first entered the field, but he saw the Revierpolizei as his "dream job," often abstractly portraying a conflict

[22] The process of vetting the police post-unification seems to be something of an elephant in the room even today, with the detailed descriptions of background checks and processes presented by the 'new' administrators being treated with suspicion by Eastern officers who

between the administration which wanted to 'put him behind a desk' and himself with his determination to be 'among the people.' He had served, with one uniform or another, as the community officer for his specific municipality for almost 40 years, and claimed to have been offered and turned down leadership or administrative positions on several occasions: "too much paperwork." He approached his job with an unmistakable sense of humor, both in the office and often when talking to residents (though noticeably this quickly vanished in 'serious' situations.) Officer Karsten, more so than most officers, described the work of the Revierpolizei as often unappreciated by the 'bureaucrats' and (abstract) administration. His independent streak was evidenced by his continuing to patrol an area that was technically outside his jurisdiction (and outside of Falkenmark entirely) with the justification that it had previously been part of the same municipality and that "they know me there." As a country officer, he spent little time in the *Polizeirevier* and worked as much as possible directly from his local office, but even then he claims to prefer spending as much time 'outside' as possible, and, despite the 'slow pace,' often has more than enough to keep him busy; according to him, this is a function of being known in the community: "I don't even have to go to people, they come to me first." Showing an interest for 'little things' was also essential to establishing oneself in his view, which would give him a fuller picture of what is going on and become essential when something 'bigger' happens: "I can't just show up after a murder, I have to already be there when something happens." He subsequently linked his knowledge of the community, and the community's knowledge of him, to a local clearance rate of around 60%, above the county and state average. A clipping from a local newspaper, on display in his office, declared him "a cop through-and-through, available to help day and night," which Officer Karsten followed-up with, "you're always in uniform."

Officer Schmidt was relatively new to the Revierpolizei when I first met him, also working in a rural municipality, but had already spent 30 years working patrol shifts (*Wach- und Wechsel-Dienst,* or *WWD.*) He noted that the pay for a

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sometimes made statements such as, "They thought we were all StaSi." (cf. Glaeser 2000) Officer additionally described the various reforms and changes in organization following unification as "not always without friction." The current study is not focused on the historical realities, but disparate narratives were identifiable between the exclusively 'native-born' Easterners in the local Polizeiinspektion and the administrators working outside the county. Local officers who had worked both pre- and post-unification almost universally presented a narrative of "everyone over a certain age was gone, and everyone younger was kept" and tended to center these narratives on how little information trickled down to line officers about what was going on. In some tellings, it was presented as if the officer had almost no knowledge about the dismantling of the Berlin Wall or German (re)unification, and suddenly arrived to work one day to find himself living in a new country.

Revierpolizei was actually lower due to more ‘standard’ working hours, rather than overnight or weekend shifts, and less opportunity for overtime; he considered this an acceptable trade-off because the Revierpolizei is “better for your health,” even if “there isn’t much to see.” As a newer officer, he spent more time together with other officers—specifically with Officer Karsten, who worked as the ‘backup’ officer for the jurisdiction, and, despite his years on patrol, the difference between knowing the community through responding to calls and the need to proactively make contact as a Revierpolizei officer was a frequent topic. Officer Schmidt saw particularly difficulties in his exceptionally rural (“Nur Felder und Acker!”) municipality, specifically as it has seen comparatively high turnover for Revierpolizei officers, meaning that not only it is difficult to establish oneself personally, but that the institution itself does not seem to carry the weight it does in other places.

Officer Hermann was a city officer, working in the county seat, which meant his offices were within the central police station, shared with two other city officers. Characteristically, as a city officer his work was, at least on the surface, somewhat more structured, with more formal meetings and discussions with officials and ‘location managers.’ In comparison to the country officers previously described, he saw some of the work he described as ‘bureaucratic’ as a crucial part of the job, though also described it as “the things you don’t want to do now.” Flipping through the documents on his desk, he listed off some of the ‘ongoing concerns’: issues with parking at a local school, relatedly his desired solution to replace generic “children playing” signs with those forbidding normal parking during school hours, the need to ‘catch up’ other officials in the Ordnungsamt and prosecutor’s office that a certain individual could not be located and the need to supply more ‘documentation’ (including photographs) and send them by internal courier, and making an appointment to visit a refugee home to follow up on a call from the local administrator. Officer Hermann was also a former ABV officer, though he described the current incarnation as “improved.” Like many officers, he often spoke in terms of familiarity which could be understood both from a police perspective and more individually—describing problematic individuals as “known to us,” but also emphasizing the need to “find a solution that is good for everyone.” Describing those individuals who he sometimes needs to keep an eye on, mostly including individuals who “had problems with—or without—alcohol,” he frequently concluded with “but they’re harmless.”

Officer Reiner was also a city officer, as well as the station chief for a Polizeirevier. He lived in the county capital, however, very close to the main police station, and had been planning to transfer there once a position was open. He frequently made jokes at the expense of the police organization—ranging

from pointed criticism of administrative priorities to simple everyday 'observational humor,' (when his work computer took several minutes to boot up in the morning, he commented, "high-security computer—it takes longer so that anyone trying to steal our data just gives up," and later, when a computer crash resulted in some lost data, "computers are funny people.") He described the local Polizeirevier—which included three city officers and three country officers, and also housed two detective and some additional personnel—as "structurally problematic," too small to offer much in terms of services or resources and with no potential for advancement for officers there, but also necessary for providing some service at all. He noted that the city had "previously been a county seat, but now it's a village." The situation was occasionally seen almost as dire, with increases in resources in other jurisdictions often being framed against a lack of increases in the specific Polizeirevier: when officers were discussing that a new car was needed, Officer Reiner stated that, "realistically it's more likely that we'll lose one." The Polizeirevier had recently moved into a new building, out of the old Volkspolizei station which Officer Reiner described as "frightening, but probably on purpose," (cf. Millie 2012 for how police architecture overlaps with image work) into a smaller and less obviously 'police-modern' building. One advantage was that the new building was not far from the local Ordnungsamt and also a canteen which was used by both police officers and Ordnungsamt personnel, meaning that the degree of formal and informal contact between the two was seemingly higher than in locations simply due to convenience.

Officer Müller was also a station chief, and though this gave her a larger administrative workload than most officers, she always tried to find time to patrol the city by foot. Notably, and admittedly against regulations, she sometimes left her service weapon in the armory, stating that in the rare event that a situation called for violence by the police, a firearm would only escalate the situation, and that "I don't want to hurt anybody." She described her work as chiefly governed by routines at various levels—for example, winter was often quieter as people didn't go out as much but also were quicker to "ignore things that bother them." Spring and summer kept the Revierpolizei busier, with a great number of public events requiring the police to 'define their own role,' often precariously, such as with political demonstrations: "there are two sides who don't like each other, and we're standing in the middle." These fixed demands for activity were sometimes seen as in conflict with the proactive work of the Revierpolizei in determining their own work patterns and networks, particularly as, at the time, an increase in nationalist and anti-immigrant demonstrations was taking place and these events were seen as risky for the police, both in terms of physical safety and in image. Officer Müller's beats was one of the busiest in terms of stereotypical police

activity, with more observed cases of crime (or at least events dramaturgically treated as 'criminal') than with most officers, involving several hit-and-runs and assaults, which provided a slightly different context when at one point she stated, "there's nothing going on right now, it's better that way."

Trust was often cited as a significant resource, essentially a form of social capital to be built up and managed, which could lead both to future access (to information and cooperation) and be leveraged or 'spent' at times when a more 'traditional' police intervention was seen as necessary. Lehmann (2010) quotes one officer:

> When I go to someone today and fine them five Euros, then I shouldn't expect them to have a good deal of trust in me and to tell me something that is, for police work, much more important.

This example equates trust among the community as useful not simply as an outcome on its own, but as a resource or condition that can prove useful in conducting 'actual' police work, presumably incidents involving more serious crime rather than minor incidents involving 'five euro' fines. Similar hypotheticals were often encountered. Many of these similarly showed a divide between tasks or activities considered important in their own right and those which seen as either not worth the trouble or else likely to unnecessarily hurt the image of the specific officer in the eyes of those involved. Officers took many opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge of past cases, particularly those who had to be sanctioned or fine: for example, while passing a local clinic, one officer commented, "They're not happy to see me here: I had to ticket the boss for speeding once." ("Hier bin ich nicht so gern gesehen, ich musste einmal den Chef beim Schnellfahren kontrollieren.")

At a more serious level, Revierpolizei often expressed reservations about serving arrest warrants, and most accompanied officers stated that very often they would attempt to avoid personally serving it if possible. The reasons for this included both a more general concern for image, presumably from the general community, neighbors, and bystanders, as well as more practical concerns: the arrestee would more likely be back in the community—sooner than later—and it would be best for everyone if that individual was comfortable talking to the specific officer rather than hostile. Keeping in touch with 'police-known' individuals, though not specifically stated in the official mandate, was seen as a key part of 'keeping one's eyes open,' or 'paying attention,' essentially part of the 'seismograph' function. This was linked to maintaining trust as a way to maintain open communication even when other agencies or other others would be essentially

shut out, but also was often reflected in a skepticism towards "hard methods" such as arrest, which could have longer term consequences such as making it impossible for someone to have a normal job. Notably, the most vocal critic of arrest and "hard methods" was Officer Wolfgang, who unlike many officers had gone 'full circle,' starting as an ABV officer in the 1980 s but transferring to work in almost all other possible divisions (patrol, investigation, prevention, marine) before 'returning' to the Revierpolizei. Officer Wolfgang commented that "as you get older, things look different, you can talk [with others], you don't always have to take repressive measures."

Revierpolizei officers saw themselves as distinct from the larger police organization both in their group identification and its corresponding roles but also because of their emphasis on being known as individuals. Several officers when first presenting their work specifically stated "the Revierpolizei is not the patrol/response unit." They emphasized and valued being recognized both as Revierpolizei officers and personally, mentioning the importance of 'recognizability' (*Wiedererkennungswert*); one officer stated "no one is happy to see the [regular] patrol car, but if I show up, that's the Revierpolizei," and more made statements along these lines. This was seen not just as a tactic but specifically as a motivating factor and a source of job satisfaction: Officer Karsten poignantly stated, "policing has to come from here –" and gestured to his heart, "and not from here" and showed his wallet. The idea that the Revierpolizei, by mandate and necessity, see their work as something that they need to care about, in that they need to remain part of the community and incidents prior to and after the arrival of police on the specific scene, was often expressed as well as observed. This additionally correlated with a general independence from administrative structures—one officer, for example, stated that he was "theoretically" attached to the main Polizeiinspektion, and his boss could always require him to work there rather than out of the (geographically closer) Polizeirevier or his own local office, but that this "essentially never" happened. Activity reports were produced and reviewed by station or Revierpolizei chiefs, but rarely appeared to be explicitly detailed or discussed critically, with assessments of officer performance apparently reliant more on reputation and, in line with Officer Karsten's comments about negative feedback, the fact that poor decisions or lack of motivation by an officer would certainly get back to the police.

Key to the perception of the work was not just the capacity to divide tasks between 'important' and 'unimportant' (with the added advantage of 'community legitimation' in making this distinction) but specifically the ability to act based on this. Officer Wolfgang simply stated that, for him, the advantage of being a Revierpolizei officer was "the opportunity to do something." ("Die Möglichkeit

etwas zu tun.") This was immediately contrasted with detectives who *must* do something. At the same time, there was a general skepticism towards both (though not necessarily simultaneously) the abstract ideas of punishment and to the actual administration of it through the organization. Officers provided some examples of cases where they could not reconcile the choice by the prosecutor to not pursue charges with either 'community concerns' or with an institutional philosophy. These examples presented a noticeably different vocabulary than that most typically in use talking about the community or everyday work: one narrative described a "typical purse thief" who was known to police, with a known place of residence, who was randomly caught by the officer on the street soon after a reported purse snatching and in possession of "exactly the right amount of money"; the evidence was supposedly considered insufficient to view the crime as "likely to be repeated" and the individual was not charged. Sometimes this difference in priorities was reflected in officers going out of their way to take actions: Officer Karsten recounted a case where cars had been broken into outside a cemetery during funerals. He had signs made at his own cost advising or reminding visitors not to leave valuables in the car, claiming that it would be possible to 'find money' to have it done officially, but this way "it got done."

Officers often emphasized the peacekeeping aspects and general stability, rather than first pointing out problems—critical issues were often only brought up situationally, such as when we passed or visited certain locations, or when specific incidents occurred, or else as part of other narratives and stories, rather than preemptively in describing the job. Officer Karsten, while highlighting the independence and freedom inherent in working in rural areas, stated that "unless you get negative feedback, everyone is probably happy." If officers were established, known, and trusted, they could be relatively confident that problems would come to their attention before they 'got out of hand,' and would not need to actively seek out behaviors to problematize. Though primarily presented sarcastically or within anecdotes, "waiting" (or else "patience" though this term was rarely used) was often presented as a key policing virtue: essentially, an understanding that it was better to wait until the right time to act—which implied a better and more complete knowledge of the situation and various related factors—rather than to act rashly or become too eager to become involved in private matters ("like American police," according to Officer Karsten.) Other formulations juxtaposed 'waiting' against either the perceived motivations of police officers or a lack of respect or resources (typically from the 'bureaucracy'): when a court employee encountering another Revierpolizei officer in the hallway of the courthouse commented, "Oh, do you need to wait?" the officer responded, "yeah, but we get paid for waiting, too." This, of course, occurred against a backdrop

of waiting which that officer used to engage in conversation with many people working, passing through or waiting in or near the courthouse, which involved following up one ongoing case and suggestions for two new problems to follow up on.

This related to the need of specific local knowledge—both in a general, long term sense as well as immediately and situationally. Officers, for example, showed pride in knowing their way around their beats without having to rely on GPS, and often on knowing where individuals lived without needing to check the address. Jurisdictions for country officers in particular were very large, and officers described the need to both be able to travel efficiently and to know which places are worth visiting preemptively, because "you can't be in every village every day." One officer had the keys to the main gates of a local campground which also served as a shortcut that would not otherwise be located by GPS. Knowing family histories, where individuals worked, where people (both individuals and groups) could be best found and when, and which channels to use to get certain types of information was crucial; at the same time, officers need to be up to date, often starting their day by reading internal reports or logs of the previous day's events or from the overnight patrol shift. This information could sometimes be immediately necessary or relevant, and otherwise more effective as a type of resource or simply a topic for communication: for example, it was reported at one point that the overnight shift responded to an assault in a 'home for troubled youth' and that a counselor or staff member was lightly injured—this event was described, classically, as "one bad apple spoils the bunch"—and the officer later (a few weeks after the incident) took the opportunity to visit the home to 'check in,' but not specifically to follow up on a 'problem' or 'incident.' Demonstrating concern or interest in this way might help to establish rapport with personnel there, and additional help in putting faces to names, but was also clearly seen as running the risk of (further) turning the incident into a criminal event. Officers frequently evidenced their connection to the community by waving or pointing out various individuals as we drove or walked past: "he's the owner of a large agricultural business," "she had some trouble with her ex-husband a few years ago but it's better now,"; these descriptions we're not always purely descriptive or positive: "those two are just a pair of village idiots," "[that old man] over there, he just wants to get everyone else in trouble, you can't really trust him but just have to stay polite." One quickly resolved case involved a ticket for speeding (resulting from an automated camera) which had already been paid, but where the relatively young person in the picture did not at all appear to be the older man to whom the car was registered and who had paid the fine. Seeing the name and the picture, the officer immediately stated, "oh, that's his grandson who visits

sometimes." In cases where individuals couldn't immediately be framed against the local setting, officers usually, rhetorically at least, attempted to hypothesize their role or purpose, such as conjecturing that "they must be tourists" based on the lack of local license plates and the general appearance of the car and family inside, or "I bet he's the guy who is looking to buy that house in [Kleindorf], I think I saw that same car parked there earlier."

Becoming involved in the community took place at various levels, both individually and through more formal organizations or meetings, often directly through or facilitated by local government. Even this, however, was often framed as a way to establish oneself *personally*—many officers attended evening meetings off-duty, rather than having to alter their schedule. In other cases, schedules were often altered so that officers could attend evening events or weekend festivals on-duty, but the need to 'show oneself' was narratively seen as more important than specifically 'being on the clock.' At most public events, Revierpolizei officers didn't see themselves enforcing order so much as establishing and maintaining relationships. In cases where order maintenance as seen as a more serious issue officers were 'ordered' from the *Bereitschaftpolizei* (lit: "readiness police", but effectively the unit for crowd control and policing public event) and a primary function of the Revierpolizei was to evaluate the general security needs; however, officers often seemed to distance themselves from the more formal and impersonal presentation typical of the Bereitschaftpolizei, spending more time at events simply 'making the rounds' and engaging in small talk with various known individuals. Some officers emphasized the need to become associated with the uniform, to become essentially, as a uniformed local officer, part of the image of the place, but others (with overlap between the two) talked about the need to be engaged as a private citizen, to "drink a beer in the local tavern."

Overall, officers spoke very positively about their work—specifically in terms of freedom to set their own goals and boundaries—mostly positively about their local communities, and ambivalently about the broader police organization, expressing insecurities with the seemingly permanent nature of reform and concerned about perceived attempts to channel their work to suit less rewarding and purely bureaucratic goals. Ohder and Schöne (2018) found similar worries about community officers in Sachsen, including the statement, "When the police can't solve a problem, they send the Bürgerpolizei" (154); this was not intended to highlight the versatility of the Bürgerpolizei as a virtue, but rather constituted a complaint that the 'defining' tasks of the unit can easily be put aside when the administration needs to exploit them to get something done quickly. These types of concerns tended to specifically involve making arrests or 'picking someone up' as well as prisoner transportation: apart from the use of local knowledge

in locating someone for arrest, neither of these tasks was seen as generally in compliance with the core idea of the Revierpolizei, and were presumed to be more related to the ability to keep a patrol car in service while only devoting a single-officer car to a task that is primarily driving. These casual uses of the Revierpolizei as a 'jack-of-all-trades' resource were seen as not only unrelated to the core mandate, but sometimes—specifically in the case of arrests—were considered directly contradictory, jeopardizing the goodwill which officers had built up.

Officers were generally positive about the members of their local communities, seeing them as predominantly 'supportive of the police' and non-problematic, but the problems of the region and demographic changes were frequently invoked as difficulties to be confronted. Many police-related problems were discussed in these terms, shifting blame directly away from the individual to the broader situation and social structure. Many villages in particular were described with the words, "there's nothing to do here, nothing really happens." Problems or incidents involving younger people in particular were often described with some level of sympathy: in several reported cases of youth 'hanging out' or drinking in run-down abandoned buildings the officers, in describing the situation, put significantly more emphasis and blame on the absentee owner. In one related case where a fire had apparently been started in an abandoned villa and then put out by firefighters, the officer simply stated, "they should have let it burn down." The owner was described as a "Wessi" (West German) who came over immediately after unification and bought several buildings, but then moved back to the West and did not maintain most of the properties but involved lawyers "every time local government tried to do something about it." This fit into a larger trend in many rural areas, with an increasing number of abandoned or poorly maintained buildings coupled with a lack of guardianship portrayed as a significant risk factor, though officers more often spoke of the risk of 'broken glass' in a literal sense than the creeping spread of deviance and disorder predicted by "Broken Windows." (Wilson and Kelling 1982)

The cities were seen a bit more hopefully, though each had neighborhoods, specific buildings, and visible groups in public (i.e. "daydrinkers" in parks or near train stations) which were essentially written off by the police as best managed through avoidance: police approached these locations or groups only when necessary and often accompanied by another officer, and otherwise only claimed to attempt to negotiate or maintain a 'stability,' e.g. preventing groups drinking in public during the day from approaching or harassing passers-by. One particular location was described with the statement, "you don't need a uniform [presumably 'officer'] there, you can't regulate anything, it will just make it

more chaotic." Other problems were often presented more in terms of something to be monitored rather than requiring direct intervention, or best solved simply by informing other parties. One such situation involved a class of high school students, apparently 15 or 16 years old, who had begun sneaking bottles of vodka into school and 'covertly' taking sips during class; apparently as a result of 'egging each other on,' the behavior had escalated and some students started openly drinking in class and outright defying the teacher, who was unable to regain control. In the presented narrative it was unclear how the case had 'officially' played out, but it was clear that the officer had only learned of the situational informally by word-of-mouth, rather than through police channels. The officer didn't specifically want to see the students punished, but saw little that the police could formally do otherwise. The situation was apparently resolved semi-formally, as one of the involved students was the child of an 'allied' official (either from the Ordnungsamt or city government administration, the specifics were not clear) and it was essentially communicated that there *could* be consequences if the behavior were to continue.

Officers had generally high expectations for knowing their community and being known there—the police newsletter "info110" (2010) reports a poll suggesting that 24% of residents could identify their local Revierpolizei officer, further suggesting this indicates room for improvement. However, the goal never seemed to getting to know the entirety of the community, but rather to become established enough to have a detailed local knowledge, trust, and access to various formal and informal networks. The challenges presented were often in reconciling the values and expectations of individual officers, institutional demands and pressures, broad community norms and values, and the role, presence, and concerns of various private individuals, complicated by the fact that officers for the most part considered themselves, significantly, both permanently part of the community and permanently police officers.

3.6.2 Private Lives and Public Police

A major concern of the present study—further explored in the following chapter in particular—is the overlap of private or community roles, that is, as an *individual*, and officially designated roles, i.e. that of a police officer. The fact that the personal lives of officers almost inevitably becoming intertwined with their work is seen as a major element of rural or small-town policing. (Young 1993, cf. Banton 1964, Girtler 1980) This was generally seen as positive and necessary both

by the officers themselves and by the broader policing culture, with the Brandenburg police newsletter "info110" emphasizing the need for a community-oriented officer to "not only have life and career experience, but to also be professionally all around accomplished, societally established and socially recognized." (2010: 15) The work of the Revierpolizei and the infrastructural and population-related realities essentially demands, and the organization generally encourages, this overlap as well, with the practical decentralization of policing not manifested in the establishment of more official posts or institutional locations but rather in the distribution of policing tasks and authority to established members of local communities (even when the officers require significant time and effort to effectively establish themselves.) In the present case this blurring of institutional and social frames is predominantly set against a rural backdrop.

However, the relation of the police role to personal lives can be viewed another way both through presented narratives from Revierpolizei officers and in the literature on the transformation of German policing post-unification. Veterans of the East German Volkspolizei described their views of West German police as simply 'playing a role' or even 'inauthentic' in the way that work was performed while on the clock, and once the shift was over the expressed attitude and concerns of the individual would shift. In describing differences in lifestyle between Eastern and Western officers, Glaeser (2000) writes:

> Traveling to and from work was a quite different experience for the members of the former People's Police [Volkspolizei] and the (West) Berlin Police. While most officers of the Berlin Police change from plain clothes to uniforms only after they reach the precinct, People's Police officers had to travel from home to work and vice versa wearing their uniforms. Since many eastern officers in the [DDR] did not own cars, or because public transportation was free for police officers in the [DDR], and gasoline was very expensive, they traveled on buses, streetcars, and commuter trains to work, while most western officers used their cars. Thus, People's Police officers were recognizable as such on the way to and from work, and many of them tell stories about the reactions of fellow citizens to their presence in uniform. They were asked questions or used as sounding boards for all sorts of concerns, and at times they were also abused as public symbols—scolded or spat on—to show disapproval of the regime. This also meant that the officers felt compelled to intervene as police officers when something called for their attention… The meanings of the concrete chronotypes of workplace, road to work, and home, therefore, were quite different for members of the People's Police and for officers of the (West) Berlin Police. Eastern officers perceive this shift in meaning frequently as a *loss* of meaning. They see, for example, wearing plain clothes on the road to work as a backing out of the responsibilities of a police officer; in extreme cases they interpret it even as apparent shame of *being* a police officer, suggesting that their western counterparts are *acting a role*. Western officers

> see this much more as a positive affirmation of their right to a private life free of the impingement of work. (84–85)

The situational nature of events, the assumption that individuals had stronger ties to the community or location, is further supported by the bureaucratic structure of German governance and police in particular. As individuals are presumed to be registered at their proper address and therefore can be found again in the future there rarely seems to be significant pressure to immediately handle a case or mete out justice, with a focus instead of explaining the situation as it is, resolving the immediate relevant conflict, and dealing with the individual actors at a later date. The bureaucratic meaning of 'dealing with individuals' is easily shifted when the officers see their role strongly as individuals embedded in a community and with interpersonal (even "Goffmanesque") factors such as respect, trust, and 'saving face' often being more effective than financial penalties. Officer Preuss, a city officer in Officer Reiner's district, responded to a minor car accident ('fender bender') at a supermarket parking lot. The general situation was quickly resolved, with the taking of brief individual statements and establishing a narrative of what had occurred and who had taken which actions. However, the driver of one car did not have his driver's license and claimed that it had been stolen—he further suggested he had talked to Officer Preuss about it previously, but the officer later commented, "I know I met him before, but I don't remember anything about a license, and it was long enough ago that it should have been replaced." He said he needed to "have a chat" with the driver (*"Ich quatsche mal mit ihm."*) He essentially let the driver go with a warning (for not having a license, otherwise both drivers were given minor fines), suggesting that it would start to cost—10 euro for every 'stop'—as long as he didn't replace the license. Back in the car after everyone had cleared the scene, he said to me:

> I told him "If you were here [in my office] before I would've told you to get a new license right away." He said he would the next time he gets paid. Maybe, but I would bet against it. But next time I'll remember him.

As a city officer, Officer Preuss had generally fewer unplanned encounters with already known individuals—but even in this case one of the passengers was familiar with the Officer, and extended greetings to his wife and made some jokes at the conclusion of the situation. While Officer Preuss was skeptical of the driver's claim, he essentially used that skepticism as leverage to 'give him another chance,' or else let the problem be resolved by someone else. The implication was clear that, if the officer encounters the driver again and he has not procured

a new driver's license, then it would not only be seen as inexcusable and punishable but essentially as a break of trust, particularly due to the fact that the driver had claimed to have already 'legitimized' his excuse by meeting with the officer. This type of warning is potentially, at least rhetorically, effective, as the chance of Officer Preuss responding to specific future incidents is significant, and it would be easy for him to follow up (if he so desired) to see if the driver was involved in any reported incidents, detected while speeding, etc., and could then find cause to personally intervene and/or allow the 'formal' punitive sanctions—such as financial penalties and 'points' against a driver's license—stand.

Niederhoffer (1967) describes "ceremonious interruptions" (57) as breaks from the formal routine, for example, a coffee break during work hours which is overtly dramatized to be an injection of 'personality' and 'personal concerns' into an environment otherwise dominated by procedures and official concerns, and in which the governing rules are either "no shop talk," or at least none without a healthy dose of sarcasm and irreverence. (cf. Goffman 1981) These types of situations are defined by their spatial-ness, being both hidden from public and from formally organized environments, allowed them to work as "involvement shields" (Goffman 1967: 38) where individuals can "safely do the kinds of things that normally result in negative sanctions." (39) For the Revierpolizei in Falkenmark, at a much more overt and visible level, this was reverse, with the intrusion of formality and serious concerns often providing the breaks from the personal, individually-defined, and often irreverent attribution of meaning to encounters and interactions. Rather than using these interruptions as a form of "role release" or "breaking role," they instead seemed to incorporate aspects of the formal role—in terms of basic orientations and institutional concerns and demands—into semi-formal or informal roles played out within contexts which downplayed formality or official-ness. Coffee breaks were notable as a ritual—often shared between different officers or members of 'allied agencies' such as the Ordnungsamt, courts, or mayors' offices—which mixed, sometimes seamlessly, topics of 'formal concern,' such as the planning of public events, information about and the prevention of crime, and inter-agency coordination, with everyday gossip, joking, and personal or biographical information. While this type of situation is likely far closer to the norm than an abstract institutional ideal, the fact that even formal 'technical' information was more often than not shared within the format of a 'personal' conversation adds an important element to the theoretical consideration of "local knowledge" and the basic communication and symbolization of 'community values.' Officers who had access to computer records and generally up-to-the-minute information about events (public and criminal) still often preferred to gather information about local 'goings on' by word-of-mouth; presumably not despite, but

rather because of, the generally pre-coded nature of this communication, that this information was put into an everyday (and/or organizational) context that 'raw data' (in this case, information still processed through a formal policing framework) would not as easily transmit. Reading an incident report about a 'disturbance' at a certain time and address might contain the same key functional "hinge points" (Barthes 2004) needed to interpret the story, vaguely, but hearing the story from someone with some form of closer connection to the people, locations, and events further contributes "catalysers" which can provide context outside of a purely legal institutional frame (e.g. what *really* was the cause of the disturbance, regardless of who can be legally held responsible?) and an "index" or form of "ready-made knowledge" which can locate the narrative in time and space. Officers see this as core to their work, as they (like most 'audiences') are still able to interpret the story told in their own distinct or unique way, rather than necessarily taking the proffered meaning at face value, and yet engaging in 'narrative reconstruction' in this way allows officers to simultaneously define problems *as police* and *as members of the community.*

Exploring the creation of (joint) meaning within the situated nature of policing requires a consideration of the "cultural setting." (Gusfield 1989) Police interactions in society take the form of negotiations over meanings and roles—while these encounters are often self-contained and unique, they are also challenging and re-contextualizing their own guiding elements in ways which can carry over into other interactions. This, in the end, is the core of a community-policing initiative: not simply to handle problems from incident to incident, but to fundamentally alter the relationship between *policing* and the community, and even to alter the nature of the community itself, in a way that allows for problems to be dealt with at a deeper level, to be dealt with jointly by community members (including the police) and to come to the attention of community representations and 'policing partners' before they become emergencies. Based on the observations of the Revierpolizei in Falkenmark in action, in encounters with citizens and in taking official or informal action, the following chapter will explore the practices and situation uses of symbolic action and communication and the management of policing roles as ways to synthesize everyday community norms and the values, expectations and demands of institutionalized policing.

4 Framing Police Encounters: The Dramaturgy of Authority

4.1 Negotiating Authority, Defining Order: Dramaturgy and Institutional Police Roles

A key feature of police work, and arguably the defining feature of the entire institution of policing, is the police encounter: any of the variety of situations in which police officers engage in face-to-face encounters with non-police individuals. Encounters between police and citizens take place in public and in private, at work and at home, during the day and at night; in contexts which can be familiar and routine to police or unique and problematic. They can involve individuals known to the police or strangers who only become known to the officers within the context of the encounter. These situations can range from responding to calls for service or criminal complaints to providing directions or making small talk with citizens in public locations. Yet these situations carry a greater theoretical significance, as it is in these situations that police—representatives of government authority—come into contact with private citizens, and reflect, or demonstrate, their potential of carrying out that authority by engaging in behavior and invoking powers unavailable to others. Peter Manning (2012) states that, "in many ways, the symbolization of governmental power is more important than the actual behavior of government agencies or their agents." (180) This symbolization at the same time reinforces the ability to police to carry out various tasks, gain the cooperation of citizens, define their own (situational) powers and responsibilities, and establish an interpretable standard of public order.

Police encounters are somewhat unique in that the police wield disproportionate power in establishing the solution to the question of 'what is going on here' (cf. Goffman 1961, Bittner 1970), and often their presence enough is enough to drastically alter both actual behavior and deeper understandings of the meanings

A. Bielejewski, *Holding down the Fort*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-39773-9_4

of social relations and action. (van Maanen 1974, Manning 1980, Meehan 1986, Mangold 2011) The fact that police are often the first actors with official status to respond to scenes of conflict and the ones who can effectively structure both what is happening and what *has* happened often gives officers a "story monopoly." (Behr 1993: 58) The police have a significant ability to establish a "constitutive order of events" (Garfinkel 1963, Rawls 2009, Korbut 2014) to which others will likely orient their behavior, and which will also conform enough to institutional frameworks to become established as documented 'history' or 'fact.' Police as an institution blur the line of bureaucratic organizations as presented by Weber (1958, cf. Kieser 1999) in that, while they almost always are responsible for a strict geographic jurisdiction, the activities, situations and problems for which they are responsible are variable and predominantly only defined as relevant or not by the police themselves. While the authority of the bureaucrat (or the doctor) is only at its most visible as one waits in an office for confirmation that everything is acceptable, and fades quickly upon leaving the office, police bear the core function of intervening into public and private situations that previously did not involve them. The authority of the police to take certain actions and make formal decisions is key to the police social role; at the same time, this social role being understood is generally key to the authority of the police proving effective. The formal function of the police, in bureaucratic fashion, would suggest that police act based on the authority derived from their bureaucratic or institutional legitimacy, and that the individual actor is essentially irrelevant in situations in which bureaucratic concerns and powers dominate. (Weber 1958)

Blumer (1966) has stated that:

> It is ridiculous, for instance, to assert, as a number of eminent sociologists have done, that social interaction is an interaction between social roles. Social interaction is obviously an interaction between *people* and not between roles; the needs of the participants are to interpret and handle what confronts them—such as a topic of conversation or a problem—and not to give expression to their roles. It is only in highly ritualistic relations that the direction and content of conduct can be explained by roles. (543)

This chapter will present the argument that the police fit into the category of "highly ritualistic relations" in which the visible social role dominates over the individual role and even in some cases limits the availability of communicative options. This is not to say that police act *only* within a generic policing role or cannot act as people apart from the observer's understanding of the role, but rather to suggest that police require, and have developed, specific practices to manage to what extent they are essentially speaking as the face of the law or simply as

an individual: police often attempt to develop a more *situational* role rather than the expected *institutional* role. Manning (2003) describes how police work—in terms of presenting and maintaining an image, consciously or as a matter of course—is based on contingency, "the selective emphasis on some aspects of the performance rather than others in order to impress an audience." (11) A great deal of police work revolves around manipulating or 'playing' with the stereotypical police role, assuming that individuals will have predictable expectations of police and interpret the police presence and actions in a specific way.[1] (cf. Fassin 2013) The rural and small town nature of the study area meant that individual relations and *personal roles* often took precedent over the policing role, even in situations that were clearly understood by all involved as 'police work.' This was intensified by the community-oriented nature of the Revierpolizei, where a stated goal is for the officer to become recognizable, individually, within the local community. This could both restrict police in some interactions and provide a greater degree of versatility, when the fluid and subjective nature of the police role (broadly) is considered, and in both cases interactions need to be managed through practices which accent or downplay aspects of the intersubjective police role in order for police to effectively frame encounters and, consequently, handle them. The management and meaning-making processes with regard to the institutional police role will be explored and theorized as central to understanding

[1] An example of this can be found in the stereotypical police officer's question to the driver of a pulled-over car in a traffic stop, "do you know why I pulled you over?" The officer likely expects the driver to view the question as more of a challenge or test, rather than an earnest question, as the question, if intended honestly, does not easily fit to the most likely 'ideal type' understandings of what the police officer is doing; the driver's response to the question is practically irrelevant, in that the officer will in any event need to explain the purpose (and result) of the traffic stop. The more obvious function of the question is to gage or test 'compliance' or gain some sort of communicative leverage: if the driver provides a reasonable answer he or she is likely legitimizing the stop by admitting fault, and in doing so without challenging the officer there is no immediate recourse if the officer proposes a more serious infraction. If the driver says, "I don't know" or something similar, this presents an opening for the officer to present the reason as if responding to an inquiry by the driver, while re-asserting the situational authority of the officer as the person who knows what is actually happening and the driver as an actor without access to the script.

Similar practices were often observed by police in Germany—though notably not as often by the Revierpolizei who make up the bulk of the data for this work—in which officers would begin situations with seemingly innocuous questions, such as "do you own a car?" to a pedestrian or bicyclist, to then reinvoke the response later in a way that re-asserts the authority of the police, e.g. "well you're lucky I'm not giving you a ticket for crossing on a red light, you could possibly lose your driver's license for that!"

situational practices and the broader role of policing within social relations in public.

The following sections will discuss the relevance of police discretion to this understanding of police encounters and policing in general, and the symbolic nature of policing, before presenting ethnographically-derived examples of police practices which establish and often dominate *negotiated orders* (cf. Strauss 1978, Soeffner 1992) and establishing a typology of policing practices used to manage police social roles. Chapter Four will further explore some of these concepts within the realm of (conceptual) violence, Chapter Five will explore policing narrative practices and the establishment of policing identities and cultural frameworks, and Chapter Six will follow-up on the specifics of the situational police role, its management, and the concepts of role transition, role transformation, and liminality within the broader setting of the community. (Goffman 1959, 1967, 1981; Turner 1969, 1974)

4.2 Police Work and Officer Discretion

Contemporary sociological understandings of the police reject the idea of police work as simply enforcing the law, of a series of logical puzzles to be solved by correctly applying the proper label, in favor of a more nuanced and complex view of competing pressures and expectations to resolve situations which may not always have one ideal, universally viewed as correct, solution. Key to this perspective is the idea of police discretion, or individual decision-making power. Discretion involves whether or not an officer chooses to make an arrest when it is legally sanctioned (Goldstein 1960), the tactical choices that police officers make within an encounter (Bayley and Bittner 1984, Bayley 1986), whether they choose to become involved in an encounter at all (Alpert et al. 2005), and nearly any other situation where more than one option is available for the officer. (Macintyre and Prenzler 1998) The most parsimonious definition of discretion comes from Mastrofski (2004), who considers it to mean "the leeway that officers enjoy in selecting from more than one choice in carrying out their work." (101) Operationalization of this concept for empirical research has proven to be a much harder task, particularly as policing research in the US and UK has in recent decades moved towards a heavily quantitative focus and attempted to reduce discretion to one or a handful of discrete variables. (Mastrofski 2004, Manning 2005)

The idea of police discretion is inherently problematic in that it directly challenges the law-enforcement assumptions of policing: namely that citizens will be punished for breaking the law and *only* for that, and that police can only use

legal factors in determining how to proceed in any given situation. Complicating the topic is the fact that discretion is sometimes defined as to include extra-legal behavior, such as excessive force or illegal detention based on normative rather than legal frameworks (Westley 1970), and, while the majority of empirical research has focused on generally legal or delegated discretion, arguments continued to be made that allowing police officer's discretion was potentially illegal and undermined the courts and prosecution.[2] (Goldstein 1960, Davis 1974, see also Williams 1984 for a discussion of this debate.) Discretion can also be portrayed as essentially whether or not police choose to follow the rules, which has led to a significant amount of the research and analysis focusing on 'control' of police discretion, which often is based in the compatibility of police practices with courtroom practices, organizational regulations, and Constitutional requirements (LaFave and Remington 1965, Ohlin 1993, Walker 1993a & b, see also Quispe-Torreblanca and Stewart 2019.) This is not surprising, as the 'discovery' of police discretion and the expansion of the US and UK-based literature coincided with the more general acknowledgment of police discrimination and the US Supreme Court's "rule revolution" under Earl Warren (Walker 1993b: 32) and most commentators were more interested in identifying and eliminating illegal or unwanted behavior by the police than in channeling discretion for positive goals.

Apart from a few observations and inter-organizational memos[3], little formal mention was made of line-officer decision-making before the 1960 s. One prominent example is the work of William Westley (1953, 1970); his ethnographic work was in stark contrast to the positivistic research on policing that dominated

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[2] E.g. Goldstein 1960: "The ultimate answer is that the police should not be delegated discretion not to invoke the criminal law." (586) Goldstein's argument, though not always agreed with, would frame the legal debate on discretion for at least the next decade, and others would typically substitute his conclusion with calls for civilian review boards or additional judicial oversight. (McGowan 1972, Allen 1977)

[3] For example, at one point August Vollmer writes: "Policemen are sworn to enforce all laws, and the public demands at least a semblance of uniform and fearless enforcement. Theoretically, they are not expected to exercise discretion in enforcement, but practically they must use discretion, for otherwise police arrest books would become filled with the names of many of the best citizens of the community whose only crime is ignorance." (1971: 151–152) Vollmer's views overall seem to warrant discretion in specific cases where the offender is clearly 'non-criminal,' i.e. middle or upper class, and seem to conform to the dominant idea that in almost all cases where discretion is warranted it takes the form of a binary between the right and the wrong decision. O.W. Wilson shared similar views, at times acknowledging that decisions must be made but emphasizing that these were primarily legal, law enforcement related decisions, rather than tactical. (see LaFave 1965: 62)

at the time, and his findings reflected this. A student of C. Everett Hughes and the Chicago School, Westley approached the police as an unknown, using participant-observation, and sought to understand the social norms and cultural values that affected the practice of policing. Violence became the dominant theme of Westley's work, with a specific focus on officers' justifications for extra-legal force and the complex informal codes that determined what was acceptable, but he also investigated many other police practices and the relationship between the police and the community. Once the law enforcement premise has been rejected, the question becomes one of what standards police are using to guide their decision-making: Westley found that police often used their authority to maintain their understandings of social hierarchies and social status, policing class and status and using violence not only as a tool to take control of a situation but also a symbol of power disparities. Westley's work would eventually gain prominence, but little was published prior to 1970, and it seems to have had little impact outside of academic sociology, though it would prove increasingly influential as a major pioneering study once dedicated research into police discretion began on a large scale in the US and UK in the 1960 s and 1970 s. (Greene 2010)

The primary significance of the concept of police discretion lies in its impact on the basic role of the police which from the 1960 s on was increasingly being called into question. Shearing and Ericson (1991) present a hypothetical police officer:

> Imagine the following. A police officer sees a vehicle being driven along a road and does not attend to it further. What else could she have done? She could have: followed the car to check the speed; run a computerized vehicle check; stopped the car and questioned the driver; checked the driver's documents; run a computerized information check on the driver; given the driver a breath test; asked the driver about information on fellow citizens, and so on. (487)

This raises more questions of not just what police are able to do, but when and on what basis they decide to take which actions. This view of discretion emphasizes the fact that police decisions have some basis in the 'craft' or 'knowledge' of policing, whether derived from formal training, accumulated experience, or war stories and informal mentoring through policing occupational cultures. (Chan 2004)

Viewing police discretion as a series of critical decisions, as is often presented in the literature (cf. Walker 1992), portrays the police as reacting to behavior which is already pre-classified as crime, simplifying the processes of how police even involve themselves in situations and the conflicting demands of various actors which can pressure and shape police actions. (Meehan 1992)

Prior to the formal acknowledgement of street-level discretion the police were typically portrayed as a ministerial agency in their relationship with the courts. (Sherman 1984, cf. Bernard et al. 2005) The rise of the crime control model and efforts towards police professionalism in the early and mid-20th century only reinforced the idea that police were expected to enforce the law whenever possible, with exceptions only being made on the pragmatic grounds that doing so would exhaust police resources. While police administrators were certainly aware of the decision-making implicit in routine police work, in a macro-level sense it was seen as simple inefficiency and played little role in policy making or policing strategies. (cf. Rowe 2007)

Although the discussions of police discretion presented here is essentially limited to the US and UK, similar patterns were followed in Germany (more specifically, in the Federal Republic of Germany prior to unification.) German policing theories were heavily influenced by American sociologists of the 1960 s, and their work arguably had an even greater impact due to the inclusion of academic approaches within a larger portion of police academy training than is generally seen in the US or UK. (Feest and Blankenburg 1972, Behrendes 2013, Dübbers 2015) The meaning and relevance of discretion to policing in Germany is compounded by this very emphasis on training, where police legitimacy is often linked directly and specifically to their comparatively high level of training, but which once again can put a burden on individual officers to justify decisions for which no specialized training was offered or may even be possible. (Behr 2006, Feltes et al. 2008, Klukkert et al. 2009) The laws and regulations covering police work, even more so than in the US, essentially ban discretion in many situations and reduce it in others.

Practically, however, discretion has been less problematic in the German context due to the use of administrative law alongside criminal law, essentially meaning that the question becomes less one of *how* a decision was made and more one of whether the police were authorized to be involved in the situation at all. Linnan, in an older but still relevant analysis, states:

> In comparison to Americans, the Germans try much harder to channel police actions through training and through accountability for actions after the fact. For jurisprudential and historical reasons, both popular and scholarly opinion are uncomfortable with the implications of unbridled governmental discretion. Nonetheless, current empirical work examining German police discretion reaches the not very surprising conclusion that German police do make decisions and control outcomes beyond the bounds of their theoretically strictly limited freedom of action. (1984: 186–187)

The regulatory framework only allows for discretion to even be reviewed as a legal concern in situations where decision-making authority was clearly overstepped. (§ 114 Verwaltungsgerichtsordnung [VwGO]) Newer supervisory structures in the police are becoming less oriented on legal frames and more on 'understanding'-oriented academic perspectives drawn from sociology, psychology, philosophy and communication studies. (Behr 2006: 162–164) In any case, German police are trained to be fully aware of and to make use of their practical discretionary authority (see de Maillard 2016 for a comparison of the use of discretion between French and German police.) The situation is conceptually not different from that identified in the US, in which police discretion in practice raises both potential issues and avenues of concern as well as the ability to actually deal with situations based on immediate factors, and that these general 'pros and cons' differ greatly and can even become reversed between street-level police work and strategic or administrative work. (Reuss-Ianni 1983) The relevance lies particularly in the specific practices used in carrying out police work and what they reveal about the police role as seen by officers on the street, police administrators, and the community.

4.2.1 Beyond Discretion

As discussed, previous approaches to discretion have been both enlightening in uncovering the diversity and complexity of street-level police work and also constraining in their attempts to reduce diversity to single measures or specific, identifiable points within interactions. More recent work on officer discretion, in particular within the US, has tended to stay firmly within the realm of positivism, with only hints of the ethnographic roots of the topic to be found in the trends towards quantitatively-dominated 'mixed methods' research using official data. (Nickel 2007, cf. Buvik 2016 for a notable exception based on Norwegian police.) These simplifications of police-citizen interactions imply that police work can be made more effective by instructing police officers to always make the correct decision, which in turn minimizes the importance of unique, local, and situational factors. (cf. Brent and Sykes 1980) More importantly, treating discretion as a singular variable, as essentially a specific action by the police officer which can be applied to a decision-making flowchart, downplays the consideration that almost all actions taken by police—consciously or not, intentionally or not—can affect how a situation is interpreted more broadly and how it continues to develop. Police decision-making has typically been applied in positivistic

theories which presume that specific decisions or decision paths will lead to predictable outcomes, confounding the often coterminous but distinct processes of *interpretation* and *definition.* (cf. Prus 1996) Police officers must, using whatever frames or perspective take precedence for whatever reason but presumably oriented around a generalized 'policing perspective', decide exactly what it is that they are observing both in a direct physical manner, (e.g. a vague shape in the shadows could be identified as a person, an animal, or simply an object giving the appearance of something living) and at a deeper social level (e.g. if it is in fact a person, are they simply a bystander, or attempting to hide or flee, or the person who made the call in the first place?) In interpersonal interactions they must "ascertain… the meaning of the actions or remarks of the other person" and then define the situation, "conveying indications to another person as to how he is to act." (Blumer 1966: 537)

Officer discretion can refer to both the strategies used to control how police work is carried out as well to the specific decisions made by officers and the variance that can be identified within the pattern. Discretion as a sociological concept presumes that decisions are not by necessity formally deterministic: officers may utilize a significant number of often difficult-to-communicate factors in interpreting a decision as well as interpreting an 'ideal' reaction and in deciding how they will actually attempt to enact their desired outcome. The fact that the role of the police is primarily an abstract concept in the singular and otherwise heavily situational further complicates the analysis of how officers make decisions. Schaible and Gecas (2010) write that:

> Considering the coexistence of competing visions of policing, it is important to note that not all officers experience conflicting expectations in the same way. Some may wholly embrace the premises of recent changes in policing as noble, necessary, and central to policing, whereas others may reject change in favor of [real police work.] Depending on which blend of perspectives an officer favors and internalizes into his or her identity, he or she may have difficulties with executing the role expectations associated with competing visions of policing. (320)

This adds another layer to how officer discretion can be considered, without necessarily conceptualizing discretion itself as central to the police role: discretion can refer to the extent to which police attempt to adhere to (the officer's interpretation of) current social and institutional expectations of the police. At an analytic level this might be indistinguishable from simply the choice of basic strategy or tactics by an officer, in the sense that some officers might consciously choose to be tougher, more aggressive, more tolerant, employ humor to defuse situations, etc. However, the implication of Schaible and Gecas' comment here is

that police may not themselves see this variance in how police work is done as a choice among alternatives, but rather as one centered around competing understandings of what police work *is and should be*, and most likely one in which only one vision, here reflexively referred to as "real police work," is deigned to be correct.[4] The relevance of policing reform to policing practice is primarily, in this conception, to what extent it is able to alter the way in which officers do their job; the fact that the authors here refer to a gap between 'reforms' and real police work suggested a cynical assumption that reform will never truly be acceptable to police officers unless it reinforces the values (including preferences for approaches and tactics) that they already hold.

Officer discretion can refer to specific actions taken, for example in the common operationalization of discretion as 'the decision to make an arrest', but it also can refer to less individually obvious forms of communication: the reference to symbols, the invocation or implication of violence, the spatial positioning of the various parties as well as how that reflects or affects the perception of differences in power. Demaree (2017) describes observing proactive policing activities "dedicated to an active and creative framework of clearly defined but carefully

[4] The popularity of the term "real police work" and related terminology to refer to a specific concept of crime-focused, masculine, conflict-oriented policing tasks dates back to the 'neo-classical' phase of policing ethnographies in the 1960 s and 1970 s, especially the work of John Van Maanen (1974) and Peter Manning. (1977) This use referred to a specific understanding of police culture in the urban environments that were most commonly studied ethnographically, as well as a broader view of policing that is reflected in the change in fictional portrayals of policing between the 1950 s 'law enforcement' model and the 1970 s 'crime fighter' model. (Bielejewski 2016, cf. Wilson 2000) In some ways, the continued use of this term as a basic assumption of policing work could represent "obliteration by incorporation" (Merton 1979) as the repeated invocation of the concept has made attempts to question its usefulness, relevance or validity seem banal. (cf. Marks et al. 2016) The decline of ethnographic or culturally interested work within policing in the US in favor of outcome measurement has also led to a situation in which a great deal of policing literature begins by, for example, making assumptions about a contemporary small suburban police force in Southern California based on ethnographic findings from a 1950 s study of the police in Gary, Indiana. The trend towards positivism in policing research in the US means that findings tend to be either taken for granted as universals or completely rejected, with little room for nuance, context, or the (oft-mentioned but theoretically underutilized) "varieties of police behavior." (Wilson 1968, cf. Manning 2005, 2013) The use of "real police work" certainly falls into this category, though the critical examination of how police in different contexts view their world is still fully alive within policing research in Europe (Behr 2000, 2006, 2018, Liebl 2003, Mensching 2007, Rowe 2007, Feltes et al. 2008, Kreissl 2008, Peterson 2008, Fassin 2013, Watolla and Hermanutz 2014, Hunold 2018) and still plays a significant role within the US, primarily within the context of the 'narrative turn' and the examination of accounts and vocabularies of motive. (cf. Kurtz and Upton 2017)

concealed patrolling activities with a high level of autonomy and discretion, though hardly any supervision, in which ideas and preferences about 'real' policing and police roles gave shape to a dramatized crime-fighting ritual." (70) The question of how the uses of discretion impact police work is not simply one of understanding deterministic cause-and-effect, as officers' understandings of how discretion should be used is related to their understandings of what police *should* be doing as well as their understandings of what police are authorized to do; the fact that policing organizations have historically tended to downplay the existence and significance of officer discretion does not mean they have had no effect or control over how it is exercised; rather they have attempted to channel it to the extent that they have defined the broader goals of policing, as an institution, which in turn have an effect on how individual officers approach any given policing task. (Crank 1994, cf. Wilson 1968) Police operate primarily within their broader policing institutional framework which provides them with vocabularies of motive, definitions of situations, and generic values; in communicating with *outsiders* (i.e. all non-police individuals) information is being transferred between contexts, or (likely intentionally) being 'translated' for the purpose of clarity. (Reichertz 2003, cf. Manning 1982) Viewing discretion simply from the perspective of the institution of policing and its teleological assumptions (e.g. that encounters have concrete beginnings and end as well as spatial and social boundaries, that every case can be identified as a crime or not a crime, that involved individuals can rationally be divided into suspects, victims, witnesses etc.) ignores the basic elements of the sociology of policing, which is exploring how meaning is made that gives substance (namely, authority and legitimacy) to the concept of policing which can in turn be perceived and experienced in everyday life. Classical definitions of discretion imply conscious decisions, but the most routine elements of police work still generate meaning for those who come into contact with the police, and variations in how police interact that may not be seen as strategic or tactical by police may effect significant differences in how the actions of the police are interpreted and responded to. Discretionary power at its broadest also refers to the dramaturgical uses of policing power, the minor variations on a theme in how police officers present themselves in front of various audiences and how they adapt or tailor these performances based on experience, in a long-term sense, and immediate reactions in the course of an encounter. (cf. Girtler 1980) The symbolism of police and the heuristics of policing are highly significant to understanding police interactions with citizens, both in how they can reveal broader cultural assumptions of the police and policing

roles—further implying assumptions about societal order and social structure—as well as in how their presentation and invocation within encounters dramatizes these roles within

4.3 Symbolism and Police Encounters

"Symbols can be so beautiful, sometimes."

– Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *Breakfast of Champions*

Dawley (2000) in his analysis of community in the 19th century US describes the creation and development of a local police department as a reaction to a supposed "gangs of rowdies." (106) Politicians and local leaders soon decided on a professional force rather than a primarily part-time or rotating watchman structure. The man—the son of an influential church leader—appointed to lead this force insisted on a progressive civil service model, with long-term appointments of officers, written rules, and strict recording keeping. He further insisted on the need for a uniformed force, writing:

> In police matters, as in military affairs, uniformity of discipline, practice and dress is considered an indispensable condition of efficiency, and wherever a city is patrolled by a well organized police force, the same importance is attached to the proper uniforming of such officers as to their discipline and good behavior. To those unwilling to conform to the requirements of the laws, police officers are constant reminders of the necessity of good behavior, and a uniform being emblematic of power, and strongly suggestive of authority, he who wears it is enabled to exert a great influence over such persons, and brave the violence of the brutal with increased confidence; and I believe that an order requiring every member of the department to appear in uniform would contribute as signally to the effectiveness of the force as to its neatness and appearance. (107–108)

In a broad sense, police work is culture work. The task of the police—whether conceived as the institution as an abstract whole or individual officers patrolling a consistent beat—is to establish a dynamic of communication in which the defining of an act, situation, or individual as a *problem* has an immediate and concrete social effect which allows the police to effectively manage it without needing to problematize a broader array of problems or constantly explain and justify their actions and their intended consequences.[5] Policing in practice is a "*game*

[5] Though role-taking in an interactional sense rarely conforms to the criminal framework of "offender-victim-witness", it is almost always clear to all present when a *police encounter*

of control" (Manning 2003: 21) which is played through the establishment and successful defense of versions of, or understandings of, reality. Consistent with a dramaturgical orientation, identity is not a *thing* but rather a *claim*, and the relevant ability of the police in this context is to establish a framework for which claims will be more or less effective in various scenarios. (cf. Burke 1989) Apart from any immediate practical concerns such as identifying potential suspects, securing potential crime scenes, or managing potential threats, police arriving on the scene need to establish their legitimacy and authority. The police, even when communication relies on personal relationships and shared experience, function as symbols who are readily identified both by their more abstract social legitimacy and authority and their more direct capacity to use varying levels of force to effect their immediate goals. At the same time, it is the symbols of policing—most obviously the uniform and badge but also including tools such as handcuffs, handguns, and batons—which often serve to identify the bearer as not just a specific individual but as a police officer, and establish an association to the observer between the individual and the broader concepts of legitimacy and authority. The symbolic power of the police is dependent on the effective (i.e. interpretable) use of symbolism (Bourdieu 1991), the power of the symbols lies in their invocation of pre-existential potential understandings of the police, specifically a multitude of differing understandings which can be invoked through the use of symbolism in different manners, settings, and contexts. Loader (1997) writes that:

> The iconography of policing—the handcuffs, fingerprints, cop shows, uniforms, photofits, picture postcards, memoirs, cars, sirens, helicopters, riot shields and so forth—connect with and re-articulate dispositions towards, and fantasies of, policing that already pertain within the wider culture. (4)

The use of these "sign vehicles" (Goffman 1959) can, in cooperate or contrast with other symbols and indicators within the social space, can suggest a 'preferred' reading of a social situation. Roland Barthes (1977), in his analysis of symbols as a rhetorical communicative device, emphasizes the fact that symbols

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is taking place and who is involved. The public is assumed to share enough in the general police interpretation of the situation that little explanation is needed and verbal and non-verbal communication can often be limited or to-the-point and, most importantly, guided by the definition of the situation provided *by the police*. Situations in which others attempt to challenge the police understanding of a situation, or the authority of the police to define the specific situation, are not only unlikely to convince the police to delegate their definitional authority to someone else, but are in most cases easily categorized within a pre-framed police understanding of the situation, e.g. 'leaving the scene of a crime.' (Van Maanen 1978, Alpert and Dunham 2004)

in all cases have the potential to represent multiple concepts, objects, or logical statements. Context and juxtaposition play an important role, as well as linguistic messages; i.e. police are identified both by using typical police imagery and coloring (police blue) which is almost always ‘anchored’ by the conspicuous use of the word “police,” “Polizei,” etc. to avoid any potential for confusion. Identifying individuals as authentic, official representatives of the policing institution is just the first step in a process of understanding, however, because the very presence of police (or use of police imagery) can evoke very different meanings and expectations, what Firth refers to as the “gap between the overt superficial statement of action and its underlying meaning.” (1973: 26)

Signs, by their very nature, assume some form of cultural literacy among their recipients (White 1980, cf. Eco 1979), but the more complex the represented form the more potential interpretations can exist which may increase the difficulty in *shared* communication: while the typical symbolism for ‘women’ and ‘men’ on public restrooms is unlikely to be misconstrued as ‘people wearing dresses’ and ‘people without dresses,’ the situational use of police lights and sirens may signal ‘emergency’ or ‘something important is happening’ to most observers without making it clear what type of event is happening or how the observer should react to it. Barthes notes that, “[i]n every society, various techniques are developed intended to fix the floating chain of signifieds in such a way as to counter the terror of uncertain signs.” (1977: 39) Because the police need to mean many different things to different people at different times, a major component of their work is, by necessity, managing their own symbolic communication to elicit the understanding they expect. (Manning 1982, 1988, cf. Mills 1940, Burke 1966) The legitimacy of the police is confirmed by the presentation of certain signs, but this only serves the function of identifying the bearer as a police officer; the authority of the police to define a situation and take up situational social roles is managed through the use of various interactional practices. (cf. Spencer 1970) These practices often take the form of violations of general or everyday social norms with regard to the place and the time, violations which would likely constitute an irritation, conflict or misunderstanding if committed by someone without an authorized social role. The presentation of policing symbols in a specific context essentially provides an accounting for the violation and a very basic narrative (cf. Scott and Lyman 1968) which justifies this violation of norms: a difference could be noted in a police cruiser traveling at high speeds with red and blue lights but only activating sirens while crossing intersections, and one which more-or-less holds to the speed limit and where sirens and lights are only used to avoid waiting for red lights; in the first case the complementary elements suggest that somewhere a situation is occurring where the police are

required and therefore the normal rules of traffic are simply a hindrance, in the second case one might rather comment on police exploiting their privileges or simply being too impatient to wait at a red light. Similarly, the use of lights and sirens can both indicate that a driver is to pull over and wait for further instructions or it can simply indicate that the driver should change lanes to allow the police cruiser to pass; the difference in interpretation would depend on whether the cruiser appears to be targeting one specific car, such as by only selectively using sirens, or where the cruiser is heard before seen, as well as on the dynamic of reactions starting from how the cruiser reacts to the other car's lane change. Legitimate authority, i.e. the authority deriving from the recognition of the police, implies some form of trust which will lead observers to assume that the violation of 'normal behavior' is similarly legitimate, but this trust is still negotiated and constructed throughout the course of interactions. (cf. Garfinkel 1963, Manning 2003) The invocation of police authority, constructed intersubjectively, is highly dependent on how observers view themselves: are they being personally identified and engaged in an more intensive encounter (such as being pulled over), simply being given a basic command which, once complied with, will essentially end the engagement, or are they only an observer who—assuming their continued behavior doesn't bring them under greater scrutiny—can continue on normally?

Katz (2002) describes how the construction of a shared reality, or a commonly agreed upon (though not necessarily mutually desirable) definition of the situation, includes a suppression of doubts as to whether this reality is actually being shared or agreed upon, asking:

> How is this suppression accomplished? Most generally, by the same process that raises the necessity for suppression, the embodied ongoingness of action. Consider a common experience that occurs when a person struggles to use a foreign language. One becomes unusually aware of the need to fake understanding while waiting/praying for a moment to connect with the meaning of another's talk. One nods on and on, encouraging the other to continue in the hope that before long one will detect an opportunity for coherent intervention. Something similar is more subtly present in our most familiar environments. We do not, after all, hear meaning word-by-word but in large retrospective/prospective swaths. For everything we understand of the other, we suppress a constant, infinite range of possible interpretations that flare up and are as quickly extinguished. And, aside from our emotional or bodily registering of comfort or dis-ease in the process, we suppress the process of suppression… We go on with the rituals of interaction as vehicles that, we trust, will keep us connected with the orientation of others. (264)

Police interactions often involve the violation of everyday norms and imply imbalanced power hierarchies: those involved in police hierarchies are not concerned only (though certainly also) with embarrassment or losing face but also with actual and difficult to defend against consequences involving formal sanctions, labeling, and the use of force. The process of suppressing ‘alternate’ definitions of the situation is not simply one of parallel understandings continuing to guide interaction and conversation until one becomes unsustainable, but rather are overt—and often ritualized and symbol-laden—practices used by participants (primarily the police, though not exclusively) to actively ‘anchor’ a certain image, to accelerate this suppression. These practices orient themselves towards understandings of the authority of the police, i.e. the legitimized power and abilities of the officer with regard to the involved individuals. The situational role of the individual is defined based on how the police treat them, and at the same time the way police treat them is often willful and conscious and intended to communicate that the person is involved and has certain expectations to conform to or else face (potentially risky) re-categorization; for example, a non-cooperative witness may find themselves being treated as a suspect—key here is that the individual *finds their self* treated this way, and understands not only that this treatment is not only specifically a recasting of their role based on the exigencies of the situation (i.e. actual suspicion of guilt or of having more knowledge that hasn’t been freely given) but also as punishment for not being cooperative in a way that the police had expected and desired. (cf. Davis et al. 2017)

Van Maanen (1978) describes how “affronts” to police attempts to define and control a situation can lead to a new interpretation of the individual and their role within the encounter (notably and often transforming them, in the officer’s estimation, from a “know-nothing” to an “asshole”.) An attempt to challenge either an officer’s interpretation of a situation or their authority to even make that interpretation leads to the scene taking on the forms of a larger symbolic conflict. Van Maanen writes that:

> In a very real sense, the patrolman-to-citizen exchanges are moral contests in which the authority of the state is either confirmed, denied, or left in doubt. To the patrolman, such contests are not to be taken lightly, for the authority of the state is also his personal authority, and is, of necessity, a matter of some concern to him. To deny or raise doubt about his legitimacy is to shake the very ground upon which his self-image and corresponding views are built. (1978: 316)

Clarification becomes necessary in cases where individuals act as if they may not, or openly state that they do not, agree with the actions or understandings of the police, even if more for defending the self-image and internal legitimacy

of policing than for any law-enforcement or even order-maintenance purposes. (Alpert and Dunham 2004) Individuals ignoring direct police orders may simply have not understood or may for other reasons be unable to comply, e.g. an individual being asked to move a car which will not start, and in these cases the officers may be able to elicit an account from the individual which removes the affront to the authority of the police. Importantly, these accounts will not necessarily have to be *believed* by the police, they must simply incorporate a narrative of police authority, for example an individual ignoring a police request responding, "Sorry Officer, I didn't hear you" in an otherwise quiet setting, or in some cases even "I didn't know you were serious," followed by immediate compliance. A narrative account needs to be constructed that hews closely enough to the narrative desired or required by the police officer, and a variety of policing practices have been analyzed in the literature which cooperatively or unilaterally ensure this. (cf. Niederhoffer 1969, Westley 1970, Reiss 1971, Skolnick 1971, Rubinstein 1973, Girtler 1980, Ericson 1982, Crank 1990, Meehan 1992, Pepinsky 1984, Weisheit et al. 1994, Dick 1995, Martin 1999, Campbell 2004, Moskos 2008b, Hendrijks and van Hulst 2015.)[6] Several observed incidents involved drivers who were unable to present a driver's license claiming to have either lost it or have had it stolen, with the officer seeming both to accept and to doubt these claims, but rather than outright confronting the driver on this point simply using it as (rhetorical, situational) leverage for a warning, e.g. "Well, get a new license and don't let me catch you without one again."

While a great deal of research has focused on the type of 'street justice' which Van Maanen suggests can be used by police—whether legally sound or not—in reaction to affronts to their authority (cf. Westley 1970, Skolnick 1971, Parnaby and Leyden 2011, Quispe-Torreblanca and Stewart 2019), a likely more common outcome invokes the 'teaching' function of police. Van Maanen describes teaching methods as "numerous, with threat, ridicule, and harassment among the more widely practiced," but that "[o]ther examples are readily available, such as the morally-toned lectures meted out to those who would attempt to bribe, lie, or otherwise worm their way out of what a policeman sees to be a legitimate traffic citation." (320) While 'teaching a lesson' is in some ways a policing end in its

[6] A related trend in the literature has been to examine the institutional practices used to form these accounts, best exemplified by Meehan (1986) and in various works by Manning (1995, 2001). While both levels of narrative-shaping share the goal of reconciling 'street level' practices and community norms with institutional standards, the former is more relevant here as it involves a manifest process of negotiation. A necessary prelude to crafting an acceptable official story is in securing a resolution to an encounter that is able to be documented in an acceptable way, even if some 'fudging' is required.

own, its use as a tool to further the broader purposes of law enforcement have a longer history (visible for example in their stereotypical use in the police and FBI sponsored radio and television programs of the 1950 s and 1960 s such as Dragnet / Badge 714, cf. Bielejewski 2016.)

Analyzing the practices used by police to manage situations can reveal the types of order that officers are seeking to enforce as well as the assumed meanings behind the signs and symbols used in communication between police and policed. (Soeffner 1992) Peter Manning (1982) writes that, “the order of social life arises from the signs we read off as indicating order, predictability, meaning and the like,” (231) and the signs police use to communicate their goals reflect broader assumptions about what ‘order’ looks like and how individuals in society should relate to one another. Long term trends in how social control is organized not only at a structural level (cf. Elias 1988) but also in interpersonal encounters can be revealed in how the police routinize forms of coercion and persuasion and by the types of messages—whether formal commands, implications, threats, gestures, or the juxtaposition of symbols—that are considered ‘sacred,’ or non-negotiable, (Bittner 1967, Turner 1969, van Maanen 1978, Manning 2012, 2013) and which form part of interaction ritual chains in which meaning is intersubjectively determined. (Collins 2005) The type of outcomes which are reached, and to what extent they are dramaturgically negotiated in cooperation or authoritatively implemented, can frame the way in which police view the community they are operating within or working for, as well as how the specific individuals in this encounter are seen to be related to the broader conceptual community or society in general.

The following section will further discuss interactional orders related to police encounters and analyze specific examples drawn from fieldwork with the Brandenburger Revierpolizei. The case of violence and weaponry was found to be both significant in its symbolism and extremely rare in its practice—consistent with general findings in the literature but of increased relevance due to the characteristics of the region; violent crime was uncommon and almost no calls for service personally observed involved ‘serious’ interpersonal violence, violence was primarily brought up by police in discussion in a negative way (or as a contrast to stereotyped American police,) and physical coercion by police was only observed in cases where the officer was reacting to being physically touched or struck. Therefore, the following chapter, *Violence and the Police*, has been dedicated to violence in its theory and practice, symbolism and narrative, and the examples used in the following section are analyzed primarily based on the abstract symbolism of authority, rather than the more immediate symbolism of physical force.

4.4 On the Scene: Police Presence and Negotiated Order

Approaching police encounters as a negotiated order (cf. Meehan 1992) allows for a better understanding of the techniques police use to manage them, both routinely or even ritually as well as less commonly in response to the varied reactions of participants. How a police encounter is understood later on—how it is recorded in official accounts, broken down into statistical data, recounted among police officers as well as by victims, suspects and bystanders—is a result of how the encounter is understood intersubjectively through an ongoing and dynamic communicative process. Negotiated order implies the use of existing 'lines of communication' or at least common forms of communication, with implied assumptions by all involved parties; these lines of communication are relevant in their perception by those parties rather than in the actual structures comprising or supporting them; that is, the links consist of "primitive phenomenologies." (Manning 1982: 236, cf. Strauss 1982a, Fine 1984a, Soeffner 1989) These make up the situations which police seem to be attempting to establish as 'real' as well as the concessions, compromises or overtures made to the parties assumed to represent contrary, conflicting, or overlapping viewpoints. Negotiated order could refer both to the expectations of how an immediate, ongoing situation should be carried out (e.g. 'norm-violating' behavior such as shouting by police or shining a flashlight into other's eyes to reinforce the idea that the others should stop and listen) as well to the presentation of a model for how behavior is expected to continue (e.g. the use of moral lectures, shaming, or sympathetic comments to victims or bystanders either reaffirming their legitimacy or proffering advice for how to avoid future victimization.) Direct interaction between police and citizen generally ends for most participants once the encounter has ended, but the interpreted meanings are likely to, and often intended to, carry over into future situations, particularly in cases where the same police officers return to the same locations or come into contact with the same individuals, at which point, for those who are observing the scene once again, the significance of their very presence increases.

Importantly, police encounters should not be analytically reduced to situations involving crime, violence, or any other of the defined categories which policing is often empirically reduced to. (Kitsuse and Cicourel 1963) Nils Christie (2004) notes that when discussing deviance and social control:

> Crime is not useful as a point of departure. But people have troubles and create troubles. And we have to do something with these troubles. The danger is too hastily to define trouble as crime. By doing so, we lose sight of interesting alternatives. We

> might move even one step further away from the concept of crime and say as follows: Our basic point of departure ought to be *acts*. The next step, then, is to investigate what sort of acts … are seen as bad. … What are the social conditions for acts to be designated as crimes? (3)

Police encounters exist in the moment, in situations in which the police involve themselves in any interactions with non-police individuals and through the interaction either party acts as if, or bases their understanding of the situation on the assumption that, the formal authority role of the police is in effect. Official definitions and categorizations are only applied retroactively or in the course of the negotiation: a significant portion of interaction between police and public can often revolve around what type of interaction is even occurring, for example if the person who called the police finds that the responding officer not only does not share their definition of the situation but even begins to find their behavior suspicious. (cf. Manning 1977) Invoking the notion of 'crime' or labeling an act as 'punishable' is a practice in its own right that further invokes special authority and ultimately alters the power dynamic. Openly or formally defining behavior as deviant or undesirable plays a significant role in boundary maintenance and everyday social control, but the police identifying something as 'punishable' further implies that the police, and specifically the police officer making the statement, bears the authority to take the first step in the formal process of punishing, but at the same time may put a burden on the officer to act in a specific way. The typologies used to make sense of social situations and in presenting them narratively—e.g. the more legalistic divisions into 'victim' and 'offender', as well as the more subcultural and unofficial categorization presented by Van Maanen (1978) dividing actors into 'know-nothings', 'suspicious persons' and 'assholes'—are contextual and depend as much on the events preceding the situation, cultural and local knowledge, and the course of the interaction as they do on specific rules or regulations.[7]

Police officers can become entangled in a situation not just through the command and control structure or orders over the radio, but often by coming into contact with various actors which further triggers responsibilities to communicate, investigate, or question further. As Bittner (1967) notes, "the uniformed patrolman… finds it virtually impossible to leave the scene without becoming involved in some way or another," (703) while discussing how the arrival of the

[7] Critics of US policing agencies have noted the frequent use of the unofficial police coding of "NHI," meaning "no humans involved" to communicate to other officers that an incident is believed to involve gang members, drug addicts, homeless, or other 'undesirables.' (Rodriguez and de Cesare 1995)

police can transform any situation.[8] The traditional—and still very common—form of police patrol using squad cars has essentially tried to minimize this by systematizing policing demands and linking performance to the amount of time officers spend in cars on patrol and stopped dealing with requests for service; this form has been increasingly criticized and seen as problematic with regard to community relations and overall police effectiveness. (Kelling 1999, cf. Maguire and King 2004, Sparrow 2016)

The very issue of in which manner police involve themselves in situations has been critical to the generic mandate and function of policing. The original intent of Robert Peel's Metropolitan Police has been interpreted as an attempt to have policemen function as visible symbols of the presence of 'order,' rather than actively serving a law enforcement function—which at the time was handled separately by the courts.[9] (Lyman 1964) Rather than a reactive or interventionist

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[8] August Vollmer (1972), even in his treatise on police professionalism, shows his annoyance with a wide variety of 'disturbing the peace' calls for service, criticizing public reactions or hostility towards the police in one example "despite the fact that the police were quite unsympathetic with the foolish law." (160) He elaborates on the transformative nature of the arrival of the police: "When complaints are made to the police department that one of these nuisance is laws is being violated, the policeman who is assigned to conduct the investigation and remove the nuisance is certain to be the subject of a violent verbal attack, and sometimes the offender may go farther. The fact that a complaint has been by made by a neighbor or by some other person does not alleviate the situation in the least. The policeman usually suffers the brunt of the attack and more often than not comes off second best in the argument. If the nuisance is not abated, the complainant finds further cause for reproving the police. If the policeman, having failed to remove the cause of the complaint, obtains a warrant for the arrest of the offender, he is accused of venting his personal spite upon the one complained of." (161) He additionally comments that, "[s]ome complaints are made to the police because of grudges, and in such situations it behooves the officer to tread very lightly." (161) Here and elsewhere Vollmer seems to imply not only the need for local knowledge among beat officers but also that some complaints, based on who is making the complaint and the background of the incident, should be taken less seriously than others.

[9] The original published *Instructions* for the Metropolitan Police issued for 1829–1830 emphasized the preventive nature of policing, as well as the need for community cooperation and to avoid unnecessarily provoking or threatening the public in general: "It should be understood, at the outset, that the principal object to be attained is the prevention of crime. To this end every effort of the Police is to be directed. The security of person and property, the preservation of the public tranquility, and all other objects of a Police Establishment will thus be better effected than by the detection and punishment of the offender, after he has succeeded in committing the crime. This should… be kept in mind by every member of the Police force, as a guide to his own conduct… The absence of crime will be considered the best proof of the completely efficiency of the Police… [the constable] must be particularly cautious not to interfere idly or un- necessarily…. He must remember that there is no quality more indispensable to a police officer than a perfect command of temper, never suffering

police, the Metropolitan Police were specifically intended to increase a feeling of public safety primarily through their presence, rather than through handling incidents on a case by case basis. (cf. Rawlings 1995) Police in the early years were instructed to use "the mildest possible means" in maintaining public order, as the very concept of policing had been met with significant hostility by the London populace. (Lyman 1964: 153) Police developed in the US, and especially in Continental Europe, to be less reticent to intervene in interpersonal matters, the reasoning being that local police in the US ostensibly had some form of democratic mandate, i.e. they represented the people rather than the government per se, while European police specifically and unapologetically represented the authoritative state. (Uchida 1993, Bayley 1979) More critical views, and today a much broader consensus of scholars, see Pre-war policing in both North America and Europe as overtly taking on a role of class control and playing little role with regard to 'respectable society.' (Silver 1967, Rumbaut and Bittner 1979, cf. Weinhauer 2003 who describes pre-1960 s views of policing in Germany as a "life-bond" between officer and state against a hostile and childlike citizenry.) Police in the US in particular were seen as firmly entrenched in urban political systems, "an extension of different political factions, rather than an extension of city government." (Uchida 1993: 10–11) The legacy of the continental models of policing developed in France and the German states—particularly in Prussia and Austria—lies both in the Soviet-inspired East German Volkspolizei as well as the state-oriented police organizations of the Weimar Republic and the Post-war West German police prior to the 1960 s. (Liang 1992, Shelley 1999)

The development of differing policing traditions—specifically Anglo-American (with significant variations between the US and the UK and phases of convergence and divergence) and continental models—have led to a variety of not only strategies and sources of police knowledge but also relationships between police and actors ranging from residents or witnesses to state prosecutors, judges and legislators. How police are expected to engage with society is determined by a range of factors, and the development of more formalized systems of 'knowledge' have led to a new emphasis on considering the implications of reactive and proactive policing behaviors. (Behr 2006, Hendrijks and van Hulst 2015, Sparrow 2016)

Police interactions were broadly analyzed through encounters, but based on a more heuristic operationalization than a pre-defined policing category, though

himself to be moved… by any language or threats…; if he do his duty in a quiet and determined manner, such conduct will probably induce well disposed bystanders to assist him." (cited in Lyman 1964: 153)

these were often synonymous: the accompanied police officers for the most part spend the better part of their shifts inside their cars and traveled from place to place, with encounters with citizens tending to begin with or shortly after the arrival of the police and ending once the police left. Many exceptions demonstrated the difficulties with even interpreting individual encounters outside of their 'historical' context; significant examples were found in many cases where police simply drove by and were reacted to by passersby and cases where police stayed in one area or location longer and had multiple fleeting or hard-to-define encounter with the same individuals. Tasks often involved responding to non-emergency calls or complaints as well as following-up on previous or ongoing cases, which was often reflected in encounters with less emphasis on 'taking control' (cf. Brent and Sykes 1980) or overtly demonstrating police authority: these encounter raised the question of how police authority is being communicated in the types of encounters which do not fit to the ideal type bureaucratic model.

4.5 Three Sources of Police Authority

The specific and contextual form of policing of interest here—the Brandenburger Revierpolizei—are in some sense a hybrid, in that officers are expected to proactively involve themselves in the community but also to take on more traditional roles primarily as a reaction to calls for service and identified crime. As these officers are primarily community-oriented but still carry out normal policing functions the practices they use to manage their various policing (and personal) roles are likely more complex and visible than those assumed within more compartmentalized urban policing institutions, as is often the case with rural and non-urban policing. (Girtler 1980, Weisheit et al. 1994) Observation of the Revierpolizei elicited an understanding of how police established interactional relationships based on three distinct conceptualizations of the role of the individual officer within the encounter: authority derived from the institutional role, mitigated by or negotiated through a situational role, and that attributed to personal roles.

Authority, though a core concept in sociology, has only occasionally been further explored or critically analyzed within the study of police work, and is often taken for granted as something which private citizens must adhere to, i.e. conflating the 'authority of the police' with 'respect for the authority of the police.' (Terpstra 2011) Authority has typically been discussed in cases where police give commands or orders, with its presence or effectiveness being measured based on whether these commands are followed. (Tyler and Wakslak 2004) Interactionist or

dramaturgical perspectives, in contrast, would view authority as being constructed in various ways in the course of the encounters, with the binary of accepting or rejecting police commands only providing one—dramatic—example of how authority is situationally constructed. The presence of police officers affects even 'normal' 'legitimate' behavior, and this suggests that the authority of the police plays a role in situations where the police are merely present. (Muir 1979) Police authority presumes that the powers being claimed by an officer are legitimate—legally-sound—as well as being exercised in the pursuit of legitimate policing goals; the perception of authority and how it should be reacted to therefore also encompasses perceptions by those encountering the police of the what policing powers are legitimate, what goals are legitimate, and whether the current situation and actions being taken correspond to these. (cf. Manning 1995) Spencer (1970) interprets Weber as viewing authority and norms as "polar principles of social organization." (124) In this sense, authority-guided situations are able to violate, alter or transform social norms provided that the source of authority can be established as legitimate: in the case of the police authority is presumed to be *legal*, and the symbolism of the social role—uniform, badge, police car etc.—are almost always enough to confer legitimacy and support the authority of the police if further invoked. The specific source of the authority, however, is not always as abstract or rational as defined by its institutional background. As previously discussed, police encounters are not a simple binary where actions are either taken or not taken and commands are respected or rejected: police authority is communicated or demonstrated through different practices which can take place at different levels. While at a theoretical level police officers may be interchangeable, in that every officer in a hypothetical police-citizen encounter would bear the same legitimate form of authority and the same potential powers, in practice the perception of this authority will vary. Officers may be treated differently by citizens based on the officer's appearance, age, gender, ethnicity, etc. Officers often find themselves dealing with "repeat customers," or returning to the same locations on consecutive shifts or even on the same day: "Some people are seen again and again. Time defines their existence as regulars or repeat players." (Manning 2003: 211) In rural areas in particular the likelihood of police officers encountering individuals known outside of work while on duty is high, raising the question of how police can interact simultaneously through policing frames while maintaining informal personal relationships.

Police authority was observed, and could theoretically be assumed, to operate on three basic non-exclusive levels, to derive from three different sources: *institutional, situational* and *personal,* determined by to what extent the presumed social role of the police officer takes precedence (Figure 4.1).

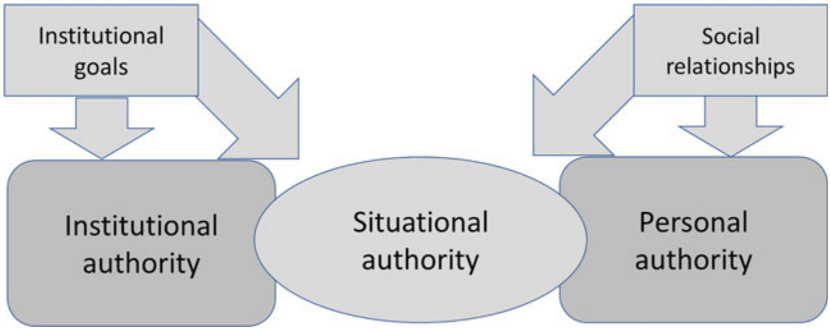


Figure 4.1 Sources of police authority

Institutional authority refers to the basic ascribed police role, in which the officer serves a symbolic role but, individually, is more or less interchangeable; the authority which derives from the legitimacy of the individual as a police officer communicated through the symbolism of the office or formally communicated evidence of legitimacy, such as a uniform, a badge, an ID, or the word of another authorized individual. Institutional authority implies that officers in a specific situation will be treated or reacted to the way police officers would always be treated in a similar situation; it conversely applies that the actions of officers will be more-or-less consistently interpreted and placed against a background of police norms and expectations, rather than everyday or routine practices. It is the authority implied in the hypothetical interaction where an officer calls to an individual, who then turns around, and "by this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he comes a *subject*." (Althusser 1976, cited in Fassin 2013: 5) This role includes elements of the traditional and rational-legal authority described by Weber (1958) in that, within the institutional framework of policing, citizens are assumed to either be cooperative or hostile, and the logical basis for adhering to the authority of the police is not something that requires explanation. Additionally, this role corresponds to the bureaucratic assumptions of police work, primarily that cases can be and need to be identified as either police-relevant or not, that police-relevant cases imply clear and police-specific solutions, and that cases are centered around primarily self-contained, categorizable incidents. (Bernard et al. 2005) Institutional frames apply a "regime of truth" (Foucault 1977) which not only take ownership of the conflict but allow the police officers, as representatives of the state, to manage it. Pressure to maintain the basis of this authority stems from institutional goals and the surrounding bureaucratic

framework which require categorizable and reportable outcomes, most strongly in cases which be viewed by the officer and the larger institution as law enforcement or crisis related. Institutional authority represents, in its ideal form, the broader tenets and appearances of 'police professionalism': "the comforting idea that we can be kept safe by a heroic corps of high-tech guardians, applying objectivity and expertise, and operating in the background, without requiring our involvement." (Sklansky 2011: 7) While some have called for a renewed emphasis on maintaining and invoking institutional authority as a way to defend police legitimacy (Proenca and Muniz 2006), many scholars have recognized the primarily symbolic and abstract nature of the institutional role and the difficulty in sustaining it in complex or repeated encounters. (Bittner 1974)

Situational authority is an extension of the institutional, but based on and negotiated through direct interaction; that is, the officer negotiates their own encounter-specific authority through repeated or continuous interaction in which the defining of the situation is to some extent a collaborative process. As institutional authority is often based in assumptions of professionalism and law and enforcement, it is, for most people in most places, something for *other people* in *other contexts,* and lacking a recognizable or clearly defined 'police situation' (e.g. an acknowledged crime or violent conflict) the formal authority of the police may not always be easily sustainable or made obvious simply through the presence of the police. It is often invoked as police overtly indicate and implement their discretion in deciding how to define or handle a situation, establishing a (dramatized) negotiation which could otherwise be handled more 'forcibly' or 'coercively.' Situational authority applies when a police officer is known to those who are encountered but solely or almost exclusively through a formal policing role, in the case of repeated encounters or interactions with the same individuals in which policing authority was invoked. Some level of personal identity beyond the institutional role is injected into the interaction, with the officer effectively claiming an identity beyond the basic stereotypical police officer, but the interaction still remains broadly framed by the concerns and goals set by the institutional background, in that the officer is on the job and concerned with resolving potential conflict situations (or preventing future conflicts) in some way. As situational authority is still dependent on defining situations and problems so as to resolve them, it is dependent on the inherent assumptions and realities surrounding the institutional role—e.g. the ability of the police to enforce their definition of the situation—even if they are able to introduce additional 'problem-solving'

practices into the situation[10]. While institutional roles transfer ownership of the problem to the police, in practice the involved individuals will often attempt to maintain their stake in the situation, and the police officers might either agree with this, or tacitly allow for the others to present themselves this way so as to avoid conflict, in both cases implying a shift toward situational authority. Situational roles can be reliant on traditional or legal-rational understandings of the authority, as well as on situationally negotiating cooperation and compliance in ways that subvert or downplay formal institution roles, approaching Weber's (1958, Kieser 1999) conceptualization of charismatic authority as well as interpersonal power-dynamic factors such as social and cultural capital. (cf. Bourdieu 1991) Pressure is exerted toward situational roles from institutional goals and the bureaucratic framework, primarily in situations which can effectively be categorized as order-maintenance or peacekeeping, i.e. cases where the officer may have some institutional pressure to *do something* but have greater freedom in deciding what to do. At the same time, social relationships can exert pressure toward situational relationships, in the sense that existing personal relationships will be leveraged or invoked to encourage a police officer to *do something* and adapt a more police-oriented role but not to such an extreme that the personal relationship is irrelevant, thereby constituting an appeal to situational authority. Examples of this could range from cases where known individuals are involved in identified criminal incidents—causing a contest between institutional goals and social relationships—to police officers intervening in minor incidents between acquaintances, adapting a police role to the extent that it reaffirms their ability to resolve the conflict but while maintaining their personal, individual role within the situation.

Personal authority refers to the power of action which stems from and is in differing ways extended and restricted by personal relationships outside the

[10] Arguably, the use (or threatening the use) of extralegal force by police could be considered a practice of establishing an alternate type of situational authority, presuming that the recipient of the violence viewed this force as abnormal for the police in general, but rather related to the specific officer. The "Dirty Harry" problem and even cliché tactics such as "Good Cop / Bad Cop" emphasize the idea that police can at times have more effective authority—in terms of ensuring cooperation and the desired outcome—when they differentiate themselves from normal expectations of what police can or would do in most cases. Situational authority, as conceived here, is more about extending the temporal bounds of the interaction, i.e. establishing some sort of relationship that extends beyond one incident and then is formally ended, and not simply cases where institutional roles are subverted or altered, though the processes and impact might be similar in, for example, a case where an officer demonstrates a willingness to use force with little additional provocation in a specific area against specific behaviors. (Westley 1970)

boundaries of a formal policing role. Many of the individuals encountered by the police during fieldwork had some degree of familiarity with the officer; it often appeared easy to discern, based on the levels of formality, use or lack of humor, and apparent 'comfort level' of the encounter, which individuals knew the police officer more as a private individual and who knew the officer primarily from being the target of previous police suspicion or primarily *as a police officer*. Personal authority is in a sense the polar opposite of institutional authority, in that it derives almost exclusively from personal experience, shared social norms, and an understanding of the individual (or at least from social roles based in more individualized institutional frameworks, such as *parent,* or *neighbor.*) Trust is assumed to often be the basis of relations invoking personal authority, which subsumes or outweighs the framing impact of the legitimacy of the institution. (cf. Garfinkel 1963)[11] Personal authority was often observed as playing a role in informal encounters, both because officers often 'randomly' came into contact with people already known to them, and because those who had existing relationships with police officers often first went to them before, or in place of, calling the police directly. Those who know police officers personally will often turn to them with questions or concerns, for example, turning to them first to ask whether a minor incident is 'worth reporting,' treating them as an authoritative source of information; on-duty officers will by the same token occasionally encounter individuals personally known to them and still be expected to perform their duties, give commands, take statements, apply various forms of sanctions etc., as a police officer, without jeopardizing personal relationships. The status of the individual as a police officer is still relevant, but it is here considered relevant in ways that apply fewer or no limits or constraints on individual interactions and instead work more as a source of insider knowledge or as a more informal gatekeeper to the policing world; personal authority related to policing is often manifested as a form of social capital, where the abilities and powers associated with the police are given additional value specifically *because they are not overtly being invoked*

[11] The assumption that interpersonal trust is the mechanism tying expectations to personal authority (in the way that legitimacy can govern expectations of police when an institutional role is identified) is more demonstrative, as the current research did not allow further explorations of how trust (from the side of citizens) was conceived or played a cognitive or dramaturgical role. This formulation is therefore admittedly tautological, but left here to better describe my assumptions of how personal authority 'works' in a policing context. Trust is the assumed basis for how individuals relate to other individuals in ways that still allow them exceptional authority within some realms of action, and in this case the trust based on personal connections and shared experiences is more prominent than basic assumptions of what one can expect from a 'typical' police officer (with these expectations, of course, varying just as much as the types of personal experiences.)

and ‘normal’ power dynamics between police and non-police individuals are not in play. (cf. Bourdieu 1991) The pressure from social relationships towards personal authority will depend greatly on the nature and closeness of the relationship as well as on the types of conflicts and plausible institutional pressures that may result: personal authority is dependent on the essential *lack* of an immediately defined policing situation, and the more formal or unavoidable the policing context becomes, the more pressure there will be towards a situationally-negotiated authority; if institutional pressures are high enough due to the seriousness of the situation, this may force institutional roles to dominate, e.g. if a family member becomes a suspect in a crime, the police officer will either be forced to accentuate an institutional role to avoid any appearance of impropriety, or else to essentially step back and deal with the issue, even with other police officers, purely as an involved individual (though likely one with useful insider knowledge.)

These three levels of authority are relevant in determining how police problem-solving is given meaning. Situations dependent on institutional authority are ones in which ‘the police,’ essentially the individual as a symbol for the organization and the abstract concept or institution, deal with a problem and then leave, either having resolved the problem sufficiently or having made communicative overtures (or threats) in a way that the problem will be resolved or minimized enough to avoid future complaints. Institutionally, the incident (very often the call for service) *is* the problem which needs to be solved. (cf. Meehan 1992) Situational authority establishes a broader narrative, as the characteristics or values dramatized by the individual officers can be leveraged (by any party) as part of the negotiation. The problem here could be considered as the incident, but also as the underlying behavior, condition, or pattern, whether identified by the police organization strategically or by the individual officer. The value of letting someone off with a warning can often be exploited to, at a minimum, great rhetorical effect if that same person is later encountered by the same officer doing the same thing, and for an individual officer, might be seen as more effective in preventing a re-occurrence than issuing a ticket and moving on. If officers make it clear they are invested in the longer-term situation and will follow up, rather than simply handle the immediate conflict or complaint and leave, it is communicatively more effective for them to set standards or ultimatums for what type of order they expect to be maintained both now and in the future. As these sources of authority are constructed intersubjectively (cf. Prus 1996) they are contingent on specific interpersonal relations—meaning that they vary from person to person within an encounter or even be ‘misaligned’ between actors, i.e. a police officer attempting to maintain a strict institutional role and handle a situation by the book may be recognized individually by others who consider that officer, personally, to be

a 'hardass' and attempt to negotiate their own desired outcome based on their reading of the officer's expectations and concerns. An officer who treats every situation as an individual incident may find that his or her future-oriented threats might not be taken seriously by local teenagers who have often encountered that officer but never seen the threats followed through, with an understanding of situational authority here undermining the premises of institutional authority. What matters is the types of practices used which either reflect an understanding of the role of the officer and relevant source of authority or attempt to 'anchor' understandings between participants, most often practices used by officers to either maintain institutionally-derived authority or to negotiate and develop authority within the situation.

Personal authority and situational authority are the most likely forms to overlap, as effective situational authority presumably relies on the officer demonstrating decision-making power or negotiation skills and differentiating his- or herself from the standard 'ideal type' officer, establishing a relationship in which the individual can be seen beyond the uniform. Both forms share some similarities to Weber's (1958) concept of *charismatic authority,* with one of the major 'extraordinary qualities' of the person being their (potential) access to the institutional authority of the police. Similar to Bittner's (1970) emphasis on the capacity to use force as core to the police role, the authority of the police can be effectively enacted when police can—or at least are perceived as being able to—back up their words with action, whether physical force or involving additional authoritative actors in the situation. Both forms were often invoked at the onset of the encounter simply by the fact that the officer knew where to find an individual and was not simply on patrol and initiating an encounter based on an observed violation, but theoretically would differ based on whether the officer is perceived as or acting 'on the job,' such as in cases where an on-duty officer regularly walks through a certain park and often encounters the same individuals, or is only incidentally a police officer, such as an officer who eats lunch in the same restaurant every day and is familiar and friendly with the owner. Emotional labor practices (cf. Martin 1999) are highly relevant to 'anchoring' either of these source, though the forms of these practices differ; personal authority likely proves complicated in its management, in that it requires both some differentiation from a more traditional or stereotypical image of police authority—which could be expressed, for example, in the use of humor to set oneself apart from a more 'serious' expected police role (Horan et al. 2012)—but still, as conceived here, implies some form of authority conditional on police legitimacy and the understanding that the individual can defensibly act in ways, make demands, apply definitions, or formally make determinations, in ways unavailable to others. Personal authority could be

seen as either augmenting institutional authority or as providing a buffer, depending on the type of situation or the goals, interests, or understanding of the other encounter participants: being acquainted with a police officer might make one more likely to follow instructions or to take their word as law, but in other cases the friends or family of officers might disregard the potential risks of disobeying an officer based on their personal relationship. The boundaries between the concept of personal authority as presented here and the more general interactionist interpretation of an individual as a social actor are necessarily blurry, and will be further discussed at the end of this chapter.

Situational authority fits the dramatized image of the 'beat cop' which is often invoked in arguments for community-oriented policing. (Crank 1994, Crank and Langworthy 1996 cf. Kelling and Coles 1996) Local knowledge plays a significant role, as encounters not only do not, but cannot, occur in a vacuum and, for every individual to whom situational authority is interpreted, the situation can be viewed as a possible prelude to further encounters. Officers do not necessarily expect to get to know everyone in a given neighborhood, but they may expect to know enough key individuals, or gatekeepers to specific social groups, as well as that their preferred way of doing things will become recognized as generally normal. Hunold et al. (2016) provide an example of police 'peacefully' establishing a more immediate, situation-derived form of authority:

> At the beginning of the interaction, one of the two police officers introduced himself by name and established a personable relationship. Yet he did not lose his authoritarian presence at any time. The young people already seemed to know the procedure and complied with the policeman's request. Further, they seemed to attach little importance to the police as they continued their conversation on the sidelines. On this basis it was possible for the policeman to reduce the distance between himself and the individuals concerned, while actually letting himself get involved in banter that led to laughter amongst the adolescents. The atmosphere became more and more relaxed during the encounter. Therefore, the parting from each other seemed almost friendly. (598)

This example fits best to situational authority, in the present conception, as the relationship of the police to the youth is still established and developed through the course of legitimate police work, specifically an ID check. It also demonstrates the similarities between the practices used to attempt to establish situational authority and those likely to be used where personal authority comes into play; specifically, the use of humor and "approximating their behavioral style to the adolescents' life-world" (Hunold et al. 2016: 598) to either distance the

officer from a generic institutional role or to alter how that institutional role is perceived.

Personal authority, on the other hand, presents the risk of role conflict, as the perception of a personal relationship can imply that the formal police role is reduced in immediate relevance. Acting in a formal police role with a friend, family member, or even acquaintance could strain that relationship, even if the person did not consciously or overtly expect rules to be bent to their benefit. (Bracey 1992, Macintyre and Prenzler 1998) Personal authority essentially precludes acting in a formal policing manner against, or in a manner restricting the decision-making ability of, the individual who is personally familiar to the officer; implementing institutional authority by taking 'normal' policing actions and providing normative police investigations could easily be interpreted as a personal affront, essentially valuing impersonal and conceptual relations between police and public in the abstract over personal experienced relationships. Although the issue of police personal relationships and police work is often discussed in the context of ethics, e.g. with the assumption that personal contacts present a greater risk of police breaking the rules or becoming corrupt, little research has examined this context of policing in terms of the police role or community relations. (cf. Hunter 1999) In this case, however, the point is not to explore misconduct, but rather to examine the practices police use to manage personal relationships in a setting where they are both likely to and institutionally encouraged to come into contact with friends, family, and neighbors in a policing role.

Importantly, however, there are few significant loci of control for how situational and personal authority are perceived in encounters. While some departments in the US or UK have attempted to restrict officers from working in communities where they live or have lived, others have attempted to encourage this, particularly in the context of community policing efforts. (Allen and Parker 2013) Rural areas where officers are individually responsible for a wider geographic area—though not necessarily a larger population—generally negate any formal decisions in this regard, and officers have little choice but to live in or close to their jurisdiction of responsibility. Revierpolizei officers in Brandenburg are specifically encouraged to reside in the communities they work in—or rather, they are encouraged to work within the communities they reside in. This was not the case for every officer, though almost all lived in close proximity to their jurisdiction; some had permission to keep their police cruisers and equipment at home so as to be able to begin their shifts in their local communities or within the neighborhood office intended for community meetings, rather than having to drive potentially an hour to reach the district station only to then drive back.

The source of police authority, as perceived by those involved, also affects how far that authority extends in terms of making situations ‘police work,’ that is, something which the police are expected to handle or assumed to have control in handling. Peter Manning has analyzed police communication from an interactionist perspective focusing specifically on the use of signs and codes in filtering, processing and interpreting information through police emergency call centers—“911” in the US and “999” in the UK. (Manning 1982, 1988) Identifying processes through which information is made to conform to a police understanding, he argues that this presentation of reality reaffirms the institutional division of social worlds into non-problems and problems which the police can (and should) deal with. The current study differed in the basic form of police work under analysis, as only in the rarest case was an encounter begun in response to an emergency call, a high number of calls were scheduled appointments made directly with the Revierpolizei officer (or another officer in the same unit), and the pre-sorting of information described by Manning took on a less bureaucratic-rational form and a large number of cases fell into the category which in Manning’s study was labeled “miscellaneous” or “residual” in which officers were advised to “have a look around” or “speak to the [person] at this address.” (1982: 236) This meant that a higher proportion of cases than might be otherwise expected began without a clear explicit police definition from the outset, and the process of defining the situation—either more-or-less unilaterally by police, or in cooperation with residents, witnesses, bystanders, victims, or cooperating agencies—was potentially more dynamic and possibly transparent, at a minimum involving different types of communicative practices than those typically found in the policing literature. (cf. Westley 1970, Van Maanen 1974, Meehan 1982, Reichertz 1990, Behr 2000, Buvik 2016) The formal organization of policing presumes that cases are individual—but at the same time easily categorizable (cf. Meyer and Rowan 1977, Terpstra 2011)—and that police arrive on the scene armed only with the knowledge interpreted and relayed by dispatchers; practically, officers often enter scenes with assumptions based on factors such as the neighborhood or type of location, local or personal knowledge of events and relationships, and prior experiences at the same or similar locations or even with the same individuals. (Smith 1986, Crank and Langworth 1996) Highly relevant for the Revierpolizei was the fact that many incidents or concerns were reported directly to the officer, essentially privately, rather than through formal channels, and the role of the Revierpolizei officer *as an individual* came to the forefront in these cases. For examples, multiple cases were observed where potential crimes—petty theft or non-residential break-ins—were only reported directly to an officer after that officer returned from vacation even though the incident had occurred several days or even up to

two weeks earlier. If the reporting of cases is affected by the type of relationship between the officer and the person making the call—professional or personal—then the course of the encounter once the officer arrives on the scene is certainly similarly affected. The dominant source of authority in an encounter or series of encounters plays a significant role in how that encounter is defined, inasmuch as the police are typically seen as having ultimate authority to formally define encounters based on their institutional authority and ability to enforce it. (Feest and Blankenburg 1972) Ad hoc typologies, such as that presented by Van Maanen (1978) may not always be as effective when the officer personally has a more complex or long-term understanding of those involved, but at the same time these relations could become a hindrance in the exigencies of the situation when commands are given and expected to be followed and procedures need to be adhered to.[12] Police work involves establishing relationships; it only sometimes—with the notable exception of the Revierpolizei and efforts towards community policing—emphasizes maintaining them. (cf. Weisheit et al. 1994, Martin 1999, Hunold et al. 2016)

4.6 Establishing and Maintaining Authority

The sources of policing authority operate on a rough axis spanning from institutional authority as one pole to personal authority on the other. Situational authority, although in many respects similar to personal authority, operates as the injection of attributes of personal relations into an otherwise role-oriented relationship, e.g. allowing not only police officers but other engaged individuals to develop 'personalities' relevant not only to the immediate interaction but also

[12] The best evidence or examples for these types of cases are still primary from anecdotes and police narratives, rather than first-hand field accounts, due to the rarity of situations in which personal authority is directly subsumed by institution frames, the unlikelihood of field researchers actually observing these types of encounters, and the already complicated and often precarious role of the researcher. Some anecdotal examples can be found in the classic, comparatively 'lawless' ethnographies where field researchers were at times given training and armed and, while not expected to perform policing duties full-time, could at times be expected to act in an emergency, immediately altering the functional relationship between researcher and the police officers. Otherwise, the best examples of how these types of situation can be perceived can be found on fictionalized television depictions: storylines in which a policing character in a sitcom demonstrates the 'reality' of their job by dealing with a dangerous situation against the background of an otherwise comedic storyline, or are forced to enforce the law against a family member or close friend, are common enough to be cliché. (cf. Wilson 2000, Stephenson 2015)

with presumed relevance to future interactions. This model of policing authority also assumes a (metaphorical) ‘magnetic pull’ towards the institutional end, stemming from the fact that police officers experience pressures from various sources in terms of goals, outcomes, and framing their own activity, but the pressures they face from their own institutional background and its bureaucratic organizational setting will—if not always win—always need to be appeased. Many cases began based on citizen calls or were assigned from higher in the department in which the responding officers knew (and communicated) immediately that nothing ‘critical’ needed to be done, but responding and demonstrating a minimal level of commitment was important; even in cases where the complaints were pre-emptively judged to be ‘unfounded’ or where no legitimate police goal could be identified, the police would often act as if the response and the communication with the complainant was a crucial institutional function, informing the complainant that nothing could be done at the moment in the specific situation, in doing so fulfilling their obligations with regards to (their conceptualization of) the demand condition. Citizens interactions with police officers are prerequisite on them having some basic understanding of ‘police’ as an abstract concept—in the *ideal type* sense—presumed here to stem primarily from cultural narratives mediated by police efforts towards image work (cf. Manning 2012) and while more immediate meaning-making factors—such as a more personalized understanding of one’s local police, or relationships with individual officers—will mediate these higher-level images, it is the rare case for an individual to view every encounter with a police officer in terms of their understanding of that officer or purely personal factors.[13] Appealing to institutional authority gives police the best opportunity and ability to “take charge” of a situation. (Sykes and Brent 1980) Police often need to maintain some form of their *ideal type* image as a reminder of where their ‘real’ authority comes from, and citizens, regardless of whether the officer sticks to the script or goes off it, will rarely forget what it means that the officer’s responsibilities and goals are backed by the legitimate force of the law. Van Maanen (1974) writes that:

[13] This is not to say that this situation is impossible: many American municipal departments have fewer than 10 full-time officers, and it is not impossible for residents of very small towns to be personally familiar with the entire department without being an ‘insider’ or otherwise engaged in a ‘policing world.’ (cf. Weisheit et al. 1994) Of course, it would also be rare for a person’s entire experience and knowledge of policing to be based on such a small sample, and even the residents of this hypothetical small town would likely be able to revert to a broader, more stereotypical understanding of police behavior and expectations if pulled over in another town by an unfamiliar police officer.

> In most threatening situations, the officer attempts to maintain his edge by managing his appearance such that others will believe he is ready, if not anxious, for action. The policeman's famous swagger, the loud barking tone of his voice, the unsnapped holster or the hand clasped to his nightstick are all attitudes assumed to convey this impression. Decisiveness is readily apparent in such a posture, although the officer himself may have little, if any, idea of what he is about to do. (107)

This reinforces the association between institutional authority and formal police decision-making power which takes into consideration the 'facts' and formal interpretation of the situation more than the concerns of other encounter participants or the outcome of negotiations. Appearing to be decisive emphasizes that the officer acts based on his or her interpretation of the situation, and others can only react and attempt to present themselves in a way that conforms to the officer's understanding to minimize potential conflict.

Table 4.1 provides some examples of practices which can either reflect an appeal to a specific type of authority or which are more likely to be associated with an understanding of that form of authority taking precedence. This list is non-exhaustive, and several of these practices could possibly, in differing contexts, be more closely associated with a different source of authority, but are here presented as a general theoretical basis for how these forms of authority can be both expressed and effectively implemented.

The defining factor of how police authority is constructed is primarily how the situation is defined, and thereby specific participants' corresponding role or agency within it. (cf. Goffman 1961, Collins 2005) While many different practices could be associated with establishing the source of authority relevant to the immediate encounter—either conceptually in terms of the basic communicative offering, or based on how these practices framed or altered the encounter based on their reception and interpretation by other actors—it is necessary to further categorize these practices by their interactional level, or the role they play in terms of framing / defining the situation, establishing power-dynamics, and as interpretable (in some cases ritualized) action to further the interaction or push for a desired (and agreed upon) outcome. Sykes and Brent (1980), using a general systems theory approach, consider "information, order, respect, and resolution" (184) as the desired goals of police encounters. Applying an interactionist perspective and the consideration of interaction ritual chains, these categories will be expanded and removed from the institutional assumptions of the policing context. Information is primarily relevant in how police define a situation in terms of formal or informal encounters (or possibly no encounter at all), as this determines what elements, actions and actors are considered relevant, how much freedom is

Table 4.1 Some practices for establishing and maintaining police authority

Source of police authority	Practices to establish and maintain authority
Institutional	• Using formal language or 'police jargon' • Putting a hand on a firearm or baton • Raising a hand to tell someone to "stay back" • Instructing someone to wait without further conditions • Using sirens to pass through traffic and lights quickly • Demanding to know where someone lives
Situational	• Using informal language or slang • Relaxed posture or sitting down • Informing someone they should leave soon, but leaving the scene before making sure they are going • Returning to check up on an earlier scene where no specific action was taken • Giving out contact info • Telling teenagers drinking in a park, "I don't care about that, I just don't want to see any drugs." • Asking a kiosk worker if there's been any more problems with a specific individual
Personal	• Making personal references or inside jokes • Offering or taking a cigarette • Shaking hands, or hugging, or otherwise getting close to someone • Greeting individuals with first names • Sitting down at a table with others in a café before being invited to do so • Taking or making a call with a personal cell phone

given, and how important it is for the police to maintain control over the situation.[14] Order is the way in which police actively take control of situations, related to how the situation is defined in terms of needing order applied to it, needing

[14] Sykes and Brent (1980) describe a practice that, based on how it is conducted, can offer an understanding of the form the interaction is to take: "The officer takes charge in most encounters by asking a question… the officer not only immediately defines a domain of consequence to his professional activity, but focuses the attention of the civilian on the same domain. By use of the question the officer assumes cognitive, or what we shall term definitional, regulation over the situation." (184) They further associate this definitional regulation with the defining of identities, with the specific example of suspect/violator as a police-ascribed identity which will both operate within that defined situation and also serve to reinforce the specific definition of the situation. (cf. Feest and Blankenburg 1972)

a resolution, and, in general, something needing to be done.[15] (cf. Bittner 1974) Apart from the construction of order by the police in more general terms are the overt and dramaturgical practices used to represent this order; practices such as maintaining an aggressive posture or keeping a 'safe' distance from others can demonstrate both to encounter participants as well as onlookers that a 'serious' formal police encounter is taking place. Respect is better considered as how the power dynamics of the situation are presented and enacted, as well as how the situational roles of different participants are constructed—often a function of power dynamics—and how effectively the formal institutional *ideal type* role of the police can be upheld. In an 'ideal' situation, a police officer can maintain a strict institutional role, which will be enough to communicate the coercive potential of the officer over others and thereby ensure cooperation without resistance or superfluous negotiation, allowing for the front-stage presentation of 'respect' or "deference patterns." (Goffman 1961) Resolution refers to not just how a police end a situation, but to how they present the situation in terms of something that needs resolution at all; what is being presented as the goal of the interaction, if a joint goal can be constructed at all?

Several factors were identified in how authority was constructed and maintained, related to how officers structured encounters, presented themselves and represented others, emphasized or de-emphasized the hierarchy of power, acted on the basis of intersubjective social roles, and communicatively established goals. These categories and how they are reflected for each source of authority are presented in Table 4.2.

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[15] Van Maanen (1974) describes a similar concept in terms of how a team is constructed with the context of defining (and thereby maintaining) control: "The fundamental situational definition to be maintained in the patrol setting is simply that 'all-is-under-control.' Yet the setting is multifaceted and hence the definition must be partialled into several more explicit counterparts. For example, to the so-called law-abiding public, the situational definition is translated roughly into 'don't-worry-we-can-take-care-of-everything.' To persons with whom the patrolman encounters in what can only be termed adversary relationships—the 'street' people—the definition becomes, 'watch-your-step-because-we-can-do-whatever-we-want-to-you.' To the department, the patrol situation is defined as 'all-is-going-well-and-there-are-no-problems.' Without question, each newcomer comes to fully accept and project these situational definitions if he is to be a 'team' member." (83–84) The concept in this case relates primarily to the various definitions of the situation which relate to the form of authority which establishes relations between police and others, which can vary between Van Maanen's examples but also include cases in which police decide that there is no need to actively take or demonstrate control.

Table 4.2 Interaction elements of police authority

	Institutional	Situational	Personal
Form of interaction	Distant / formal	Dramatized negotiation	Close / informal
Spatial ordering	Strict control	Contingent	Minimal
Indicator of control	Facing and "safe distance"	Conditionally relaxed	Everyday "personal bubble"
Dramatization of power	Commands	Requests / situation-dependent	Relationship-dependent
Police role integrity	Solid	Solid < > flexible	Subverted
Attribution of roles	Formal	Formal < > individual	Individual / alternate context
Interactional goal	Resolution of incident, legitimate institutional outcome	Avoidance of future incidents, establishment of legitimate basis of control	Situation-dependent (strict maintenance of personal role or appeal to alternative source of authority)

4.6.1 Form of Interaction

The form of interaction refers to how an encounter is jointly structured (if at all) with 'distant' encounters, i.e. the simple visible presence of police, already serving to appeal to institutional authority, and other policing encounters taking place at a more formal, explicit level: i.e. when institutional authority is in play and perceivable, involved participants will always be aware that they are in a former policing encounter and generally of what their ascribed role is, though conflict between role ascriptions are still possible, for example if a witness suddenly becomes a suspect. Distancing here also refers more generally to the type of social practices and even the rhetoric and language that will be used: more formal language (e.g. in German with the use of the formal second person "Sie" rather than the informal "du," or the use of last names rather than first names, or even by the specific choice of words) will establish the boundaries of the interaction, as well as the lack of narrative elements that emphasize 'personality' beyond formal or generalized policing roles, e.g. humor at the expense of or subverting the police role. (Humor at the expense of others within the interaction or in cases where it is unclear if the joke is intended for the others or only for the police will likely reinforce the 'distancing' between the police and non-police, cf. Van

Maanen 1978; Fassin 2013 presents many examples of police maintaining 'formal' and controlled situations despite speaking more directly, typically rudely, with residents, suggesting that the use of racial slurs and offensive stereotypes within encounters simply reinforces the social and power distance between the police and minority youth.) Shon (2000) points out how, in police-citizen encounters, "politeness can be used to be impolite." (162) Using rhetorical practices to establish and fix identity (cf. Burke 1969, Branaman 2016) can be seen in how police either maintain a 'common front' (e.g. the situational reflection of 'us vs. them') or work to establish more dynamic forms of identity, where individuals have more control over how they present themselves symbolically (through gestures, spatial arrangements, their role within the interaction and turn-taking, etc.) as well as verbally. Situational authority is invoked when police structure situations more overtly as negotiations: dramatized, because the formal level is still interpretable and the ability of the police to revert to an institution-based form of authority is never truly removed, and even in situations where police officers act informally, casual, or friendly, other participants in the encounter may remain wary of doing something to upset the police, incriminate themselves, or even feel that the appeal to situational authority is a trap or a trick, or simply a form of rapport building that will be later used as a way to coerce cooperation. (Davis et al. 2017, cf. Goffman 1981) Personal authority will be maintained in cases where there is no overt or police-maintained structure to the encounter, or else that authority itself will be challenged; in cases where a 'formal' structure has been established but personal authority is invoked, it will be necessary for the officer to maintain an overtly informal style of communication, at least informal when compared to the formalized style of police interaction: e.g. in a case where a witness to a crime is a close friend of the officer it is likely that the officer will use 'everyday' informal language not only out of habit but to specifically avoid the type of role strain that could result; in cases where a personal acquaintance is identified as a suspect or having committed a violation, it may be necessary to either maintain language of institutional constraint, "I'm sorry I have to do this, but I don't have a choice" or else change footing and revert to an institutional form of authority essentially denying the relevance of the personal relationship to the situation. (Goffman 1981)

4.6.2 Spatial Ordering

Spatial ordering refers to the range of processes and practices of arranging actors and controlling access to locations, items, and other actors through which police

demonstrate that a police encounter is taking place, as well as how strict (i.e. formally defined and controlled) that encounter is. Within formal policing encounters, maintaining spatial ordering of encounter participants is considered central to maintaining order and safety, as well as related to a potential need to secure a crime scene for further investigation. Strict control as a practice refers to the formal separation of groups, whether that means a spatial as well as social divide between the police and others or in the separation of different parties within an encounter. From an institutional perspective, the police objective is to quickly and efficiently define a situation, and this might involve avoiding allowing the situation to change prior to any formal judgment: for example, police showing up to a noise complaint and discovering a party they consider to be relatively harmless may not show concern if individuals leave or enter different rooms at will or attempt to leave the party while the officers are talking with the host; they might make overtures toward establishing situational authority conditional on the cooperation of those whose cooperation is required, but still consider the geographic and social space to be ‘controlled’ simply by their presence and the lack of overt resistance. If they, however, show up to a scene of reported violence involving a weapon they might be more concerned about immediate risks or the reduced chance of a resolving the situation in an institutionally desirable way if, for example, the offender, key witnesses, or even the victim are able to flee the scene or dispose of evidence. Situational authority is related to more contingent forms of spatial ordering, as in the example of the noise complaint at the party. Individuals may be more free to come and go, or to move around the location or even approach officers, but this will still remain dependent upon and often part of the negotiation over the situation itself. The following category, indicators of control, is often necessary for effectively communicating what type of spatial ordering is practically being enforced. Who is considered engaged or disengaged from the encounter will be contingent on the interpretation of the situation, but unlike in the stricter control of institutional authority, individuals will often have some leeway in negotiating their own power to orient themselves socially and spatially. A spectrum could be imagined here, with one extreme being cases where police take physical control over individuals, either with commands such as “stay still” or “lie down on the ground” or with the application of handcuffs or physical force, and moving in the direction of complete freedom of movement with no attempt by the police imply any control over the movement of others or their ability to address (or ignore the presence of) the police. Spatial ordering in terms of personal authority is considered minimal, but may also be conditionally dependent. The lack of a structured policing situation limits the ability of the police to set ‘boundaries’ in the ways that would otherwise be implicit in the

police role, but individual-specific elements of control certainly impact situations; for example, on-duty officers would almost certainly allow close friends or family members to approach closer than they would most strangers, but would likely stop them if they tried to reach for the officer's gun even if they interpreted it as a joke simply to provoke a reaction.

4.6.3 Indicators of Control

The indicators of control are the applied behaviors and enforced social norms to maintain the desired spatial ordering. This often at the same time defines the broader encounter in terms of how 'focused' or 'engaged' participants must be. (Goffman 1961) Stricter forms of control will make it clear that the actions of the police (and reactions by participants) are the only things that matter within the situation, while more relaxed forms will allow for multi-focused encounters in which multiple interactions can take place without needing to reference one another or overlap until attention is specifically drawn to authoritative action. In formal situations police will often maintain facing—i.e. keeping the other individuals in their sight and in a fixed location as they consider necessary. This also includes maintaining a distance between the officer and others that is considered to be 'safe,' while this distance is not consistent and is often determined more by the physical surroundings than by any strict rule, the character of an encounter can often be determined by how close an officer stands to other individuals, if they make attempts to specifically keep their holstered weapon out of the immediate reach of others, and how officers react when others make unexpected movements or gestures. By establishing a more personalized, situational relationship with individuals (or possibly with a location, such as a café or restaurant that officers regularly frequent) a more conditionally relaxed approach will be taken—again with the awareness that this can always be altered. In the previous example of a noise complaint where the guests are allowed to overtly ignore the presence of the police etc., the sudden outbreak of violence or any sign of 'resistance' (insults to the police, conspicuously turning up the music after the police arrive) may result in the police deciding to temporarily 'lock down' the situation and demand (not request) that everyone remain still, that the music be turned down, and thereby signal that control is being asserted and not negotiated. In terms of personal authority, the 'normal' rules for everyday actions would apply in terms of how 'personal space' is considered. Overt violations of the normal expectations of police behavior would be signals that personal authority is being appealed to: during the policing of soccer match (described later in

this chapter), several individuals approached Officer Hermann from behind and tapped him on the shoulder, sometimes following up with jokes at the expense of the police role—by allowing this behavior, Officer Hermann was accepting this interpretation of his social role with regards to that individual and maintaining personal, rather than institutional, authority. In another case, an individual reporting a break-in had been a high school friend of the officer; the two greeted each other with first names and shook hands, and then the other individual said to me, "normally you don't greet a police officer like that," essentially setting off the informal and personal tone that the rest of the encounter would take on, including several complaints by the officer about "the bureaucracy in the police" and the lack of "interest in finding out what is going on" among patrol officers, statements which would be unimaginable in most other contexts.

4.6.4 Dramatization of Power-Dynamics

The power-dynamics between the police and citizens—the hierarchy—remains implicit in most encounters, though they may possibly be supplanted in cases where personal authority is dominant. Even though the institutional role provides police with a dominant role in legitimized encounters, this role cannot be used to entirely remove or subvert its own power-dynamics (at a minimum, related to the earlier observation that citizens might simply see these attempts as a trap or a trick.) How these power-dynamic are rhetorically expressed, however, can establish what type of encounter is being *acted out,* even if some or all parties only believe it to be superficially so. At the formal level, police issue commands which are expected to be followed and backed up by the ability to issue formal sanctions and employ coercive force (cf. Bittner 1970, Proenca and Muniz 2006); Brent and Sykes (1980) state, in regards to the police officer maintaining this type of role, "his authority is not effective merely because he has the right to use force, but because he acts, quite literally, in a commanding way." (185) The use of commands is, of course, in most interactions involving strangers deeply norm-violating behavior, and a significant and command practice for establishing situational authority is by framing these commands as *requests:* in some cases these may truly be requests, and ignoring them may have no significant consequences, but more often they serve as a 'face saving' option, allowing the other party to comply but maintain that it was their own decision. (cf. Goffman 1959) While the police might establish a strict form of authority by telling a group to leave, issuing a "Platzverweis" or order to disburse, they may instead allow some leeway while expecting the same outcome, e.g. "you can stay here for another

hour," making the specific choice of when to leave at least superficially one for the group and not the police to make, although this might not be interpreted the same if the group finds the time constraints unfair or essentially the same as a command, e.g. "you can stay here for another two minutes." While formal commands may often be technically phrased as requests, ("Your papers, please.") what is relevant is how these are interpreted by the recipient, and secondarily the attempts by the police to make these overtures more likely to be interpreted as requests. These practices may include spelling out the available options and outcomes, such as telling the host of a party where a noise complaint has been received that, while the police themselves don't find the noise excessive, in order to avoid future complaints, the host can either choose to keep all the guests inside, or provide the police with their phone number and they can call back if another complaint is made. Personal authority, in this case, will often preclude making either commands or requests from the position of police authority, but in general are relationship-dependent: parents who are police may just as easily issue command to children, and may even back them up with pseudo-invocations of police authority, but attempts to make commands to neighbors or friends may in some cases verge on abuse of authority.

4.6.5 Police Role Integrity

The integrity of the police role—that is, the formalized, institutionalized, ideal type role of the police—is theorized to be almost always present in policing encounters due to the expectations of the non-police participants in that encounter. However, the use of differing practices—or even missteps, errors, or "unprofessional" behavior by an officer—may erode or transform this role. The idealized police role is one which is most easily maintained in situations which correspond specifically to that role: that is, formal, bureaucratically definable incident-based interactions where the officer follows a set proper procedure and works to achieve institutional goals. (cf. Manning 1995, Terpstra 2011) Any deviations from this ideal type—and these are certainly inevitable—may cause a 'disjointing' between the role being enacted and the perception of the situation, but as the power-dynamic related to the institutional authority of the police role still essentially allows the officers to determine the interactional order of the situation, this disjointing may serve more as a reflection of that power-dynamic, by making it clear to the citizen that only the 'official' definition of the situation, and not

their perceptions, matter.[16] Maintaining (or reasserting) an authoritative institutional role provides a stronger basis for the officer to take charge and control the encounter through other interactional elements, such as spatial ordering.[17] (cf. Reiss 1971, Rubinstein 1973, Sykes and Brent 1980) Other times—very often among observed cases—as the formal definition of the situation became less tenable police made either made fewer attempts to maintain a purely institutional authority or used role-distancing practices here associated with situational authority (cf. Goffman 1961, Stebbins 2016) i.e. in cases where no immediate conflict

[16] As Blumer (1966) notes, even those individuals fulfilling institution roles in bureaucratic settings are people, and when the role seems mismatched or absurd within the situation it is generally to be expected that the vocabularies used and actions taken will reflect this even if institutional forms and goals are not rejected, e.g. in the case of bureaucrats apologizing while making requests for additional information or pointing out that the incorrect form was used. Van Maanen (1974) provides some examples of officers intentionally making absurd or seemingly inaccurate statements simply to confuse others or to test out their ability to define the situation. An admittedly ridiculous example can be found in the comedy film *Super Troopers* (2001, dir: Jay Chandrasekhar) in which police officers pull over a car, leave the scene immediately after asking for license and registration, and then drive back and attempt to again pull over the same car, still pulled over, without acknowledging the previous encounter and maintaining stereotypical "tough cop" posturing and essentially challenging the occupants of the car to point out the absurdity of the situation.

[17] Fassin (2013) presents an example of how police in France maintain control of situations both through apparently ingrained assumptions of what police are and can do as well as through physical practices (both legitimate and objectively 'excessive'):

> In fact, contrary to popular belief, identity checks and body searches "go smoothly" in the vast majority of cases, in the sense that young people submit to them without complaint, even when they are exposed to verbal provocation and physical pressure. They know from experience how unequal the balance of power is (any slip results in immediate arrest, which generally involves physical coercion with an arm lock, being hurled to the ground, and handcuffing) and their position in relation to the law (a charge of insulting or resisting the police is taken much more seriously in the courts than complaints of brutality by the public). They therefore do not risk "getting smart" with the officers, who sometimes want nothing more, particularly in encounters with young they have already had dealings with and are trying to "get." But there are, of course, also cases where the interaction unfolds calmly because the law enforcement agents act with civility. (90)

This further suggests that the use of more 'professional' or more 'aggressive' appearances can both still serve to reinforce differing versions of an institutional role without necessarily being guided by institutional concerns, with officers still treating individuals based on past experience, longer histories, and stereotypes and simply downplaying this factors within the dramaturgy of the interaction.

or emergency was identified or where the police decision to initiate an encounter was based more on gaining 'local knowledge' or maintaining relations, where time factors were less important, and where individuals had some familiarity with the police. In some cases, this 'matching' of a less formally defined situation with a less formally defined role was described as a way to pre-emptively 'defuse' potentially escalating situations or "not make anyone worried," although in others it was less obviously a conscious choice and arguably a more 'natural' reaction: it is likely unreasonable to expect police officers to maintain a front-stage 'on guard' posturing in every situation, particularly when they have no reason (or desire) to view the immediate situation as important from a policing perspective. (cf. Goffman 1971) At the same time, it is presumed that citizens in most cases will, unless a preponderance of overtures alter the interpretation of the situation, initially approach and react to police based primarily on assumptions of institutional authority. The significant exception here is where personal relationships are able to subvert role expectations or challenge the master status of the authoritative role, most obvious in situations where the officer is making no or little attempt to play the role of an officer, but also evident in formally defined situations, such as responding to calls or the scene of an accident, where pre-existing personal relationships significantly erode the predicates of hierarchical power-dynamics.[18] One example of this was found in the case of a minor traffic accident (without injuries) which involved a close friend of one officer's wife; while the formal processes were followed in a technical sense, the officer spoke much more openly and at greater length about what was being done, why it needed to be done, how long things would take, and what could be done to

[18] Van Maanen (1974) mentions this as a key lesson within police socialization: that individuals will react to the presence of the officer as if they are simply a "faceless blue suit." This in turn can incline officers to seek out locations, social groups, and encounters where role-distancing (from the institutional ideal type role) is both possible and acceptable: "The rookie painfully discovers that wherever he is to go, his presence is bound to generate anxiety. People stare at him and scrutinize his movements. While driving through his sectors, he finds that a major problem is avoiding accidents caused from the almost neurotic fashion in which other drivers react to his perceptually nefarious squad car. Soon he appreciates the relatively few places where he receives a warm and friendly welcome." (89) These places include both organizational spaces, such as hospitals and fire stations, as well as locations inhabited by 'friendlies' such as businesspeople who see the presence of the police as mutually beneficial. Van Maanen comments that many of these individuals, however, are aware that the officers they know are unlikely to be the ones to respond in an emergency, somewhat weakening these types of relationships: in the context of the Revierpolizei in Brandenburg, and rural or small-town policing in general, however, it is likely that these types of relationships are not only stronger and more common but also play a significant role in establishing alternative (i.e. situational or personal) understandings of the immediate authority of the police.

simply things than was seen in cases involving strangers (or with the others who were involved.) At some level this might reflect the friend of the wife simply being more trusting that her interested would not be put in jeopardy and allowing for greater transparency within the interaction with less risk of it being viewed as a contest of claims or identities. (cf. Burke 1969) As (perceptually) police officers present the great risk to those who are involved but are unaware of *why* they are involved and therefore not only lack the ability to define the situation formally but even a clear basis for how to define it, the ability to refer to personal relationships and establish a pattern of trusts can also lead to officers relying less on maintaining institutional authority, at least in situations where the outcomes to be negotiated are relatively benign.

4.6.6 Attribution of Roles

As the party with the greatest ability to define a situation, the police limit what roles are able to be taken or dramaturgically constructed by the other participants. This is most visible within an overtly structured or defined encounter, such as when police respond to a call or stop a passerby, but also applicable when police are simply on patrol and observe individuals on the street and based on their impressions (e.g. of appearance, behavior, suitability to the time and place) decide if they should intervene or in which manner they should present themselves, e.g. the use of civil inattention, "turning a blind eye" (Manning 2003: 19) or by actively and obviously looking at the person (with a "Kontrollblick.") In this case of structured encounters, the actions of other participants will often be restricted based on their role within the typology being applied by the police, e.g. a person considered a potential subject will be more closely watched, if not physically restrained, and prevented (verbally or with other means) from leaving the immediate area and usually the sight of the officers, while bystanders or victims may conditionally be given more leeway in moving around, talking to others, making requests of the officers, or even involving other participants. This also includes the use of rhetoric or rhetorical constraints to limit the vocabularies available to the others, confining them to desired roles: Shon (2000) writes that, "when police officers enact their interpretive structure into speech production, other possibilities and modalities of understanding the situation are repressed." (175) Davis et al. (2017) discuss how police (in interrogations) tended to ignore questions directed at them and instead respond with more of their own questions, demonstrating without overtly stating that the role of the individual is to respond to questions and provide information but that that role does not require understanding the broader context or even the immediate goal of the police in

asking specific questions or within the encounter in its entirety. Establishing a formal definition of the situation which itself defines the possible roles, the cast of characters, can enforce authority by encouraging or coercing others to either take up the role ascribed to them or else to be resigned to take up an even less desirable pre-categorized role, e.g. "the asshole" (Van Maanen 1974, 1988) or "the hysteric." (Shon 2000: 175, see also Watson 1983) Rhetorical practices in this vein could extend to include degradation ceremonies (Garfinkel 1956) in which the status of the individual is challenged but in a way which permits no viable means of defense or reconstitution within the frame of the interaction taking place; addressing individuals in a certain way (e.g. alternating first and last names between individuals to demonstrate who is more valued within the interaction), allowing individuals to express concerns or cutting them off, or showing disinterest in response to statements of concern or expressions of identity (e.g. "I don't care who you are, I'm just telling you to move") can all serve to anchor an institutional role and corresponding source of authority for the officer. Appealing to situational authority, not only distancing from the institutional police role but also from the institutionally-defined encounter, will involve the potential for approaching and interacting with individuals more visibly outside of or apart from fixed pre-categorized roles, though this will not always be case: police encountering the same group of young people skateboarding in a park several times over a weekend may still treat interact with them more distantly and within the context of police-applied institutionally-derived categorizations of the role they are playing within the encounter, but still act more informally in other ways, refer to past and potential future encounters, and act more towards establishing a police role that is not fixated on solving an immediate conflict or making immediate demands. (cf. Hunold 2011) When personal authority supplants the institutional role, the attribution of roles will be made on a more overt individual case-by-case level—which may manifest in ways similar to how situational authority is invoked, but with the minor but significant difference that the other engaged actors have a much stronger position in claiming and enacting their identity—or else role attribution will take place within an entirely different institutional context; for example, to a police academy instructor, a police officer may primarily be a former student, and to that student the other will be a former teacher as long as on other context changes make institutional roles unavoidable.

4.6.7 Interactional Goal

In general, the stricter the formal structure of an encounter or interaction, the more necessary (or at least useful) it is for all engaged parties to have a common understanding of which outcome(s) are desired. Institutional pressures often require specific types of outcomes; for example, in domestic violence situations police are essentially required to remove one participant from the scene or else make a formal determination that no violence occurred. Formal goals generally are centered on the understanding of the situation as an incident, in which resolution requires a (more-or-less) formal determination of 1) if the situation is something the police need to handle and 2) what steps should be taken to resolve the incident or prepare it for further processing. (Bittner 1970, Reiss 1971, Manning 1988, 1995) This can range from dealing with immediate life-or-death emergencies to making reports for minor incidents of vandalism; these types of cases lend themselves to pre-existing codes which can be applied and indicate the severity and nature of the incidence, which further implies priority as well as how strict institution roles are likely to be followed. The general category of goal will often be indicated or implied when the encounter is initiated, though it can be modified or negotiated in the course of an encounter, and in cases involving strict institutional roles the goal may not be communicated to other participants beyond making it clear that the police are attempting to take control.[19] Police arriving at the scene of a reported crime are aware of too many institutional risks and pressures to engage in ten minutes of small-talk, unless doing so serves another relevant purpose such as eliciting information, gaining cooperation, avoiding future conflict or resistance, etc. (cf. Rubinstein 1973) The visibility of relatively clear and immediate goals—the demand condition—means that too much could be at risk if something goes wrong, the complaint is not

[19] De Maillard et al. (2016) describe German community-oriented or juvenile officers often proactively performing ID checks on youth in public specifically because they are unfamiliar, quoting one officer from Cologne who says he “talk[s] to them in a leisurely manner,” and “ask[s] what they are doing here” to see how they react. (6) No cases specifically fitting this example were observed, but due to demographic factors in the region and the generally low population density it is likely less common that completely unfamiliar youth would be encountered in public with the officer having some frame of reference for essentially ‘who they were.’ The distinction made by de Maillard et al. essentially establishes these types of practices as more situational when used by the German police—reserving the ability to assert institutional roles and definitions—whereas the French police often begin by maintaining institutional posturing and authoritativeness, attributed to the phasing out of community-oriented programs and the greater hostility between minorities (regardless of place of birth) and police. (see also Lukas and Gauthier 2011, Fassin 2013)

effectively resolved, or a chance to establish a measure of success (i.e. through the use of official reports, arrests, and other official determinations) is missed while the police were engaged in what could be considered 'personal,' 'unprofessional' or even lazy behavior which is later determined to have not fit to the situation. The idea of "just the facts" in police interactions with citizens (specifically witnesses) is an ideal type institutional construction, of course, and police engage with citizens using a variety of rhetorical practices, levels of formality and politeness, and vocabularies based not just on the 'seriousness' (i.e. fit to an institutional ideal) of the situation but on a multitude of factor including characteristics of the individual officer and readings of the overall scene and social roles. These practices roughly fit along a spectrum, however, ranging from the institutional ideal—situations in which a police officer is there to do police work[20]—to purely private interactions in which the interaction goal can be varied (a neighbor who is a police officer may still need to borrow sugar) or unclear or open-ended (as in a police officer meeting a former classmate while on patrol and stopping to say hello.) When personal authority is being established or maintained, a significant visible goal of the interaction is specifically the maintenance of this role

[20] Davis et al. 2017 provide several relevant examples from the analysis of police interrogations; the setting is relevant as even informal or seemingly friendly conversation is firmly situated within possible the most formal institutional policing context. Their analysis of how police can alter the presentation of interactional goals demonstrates the connections between this as an element of encounters with the attribution of roles and the dramatization of power dynamics:

> If narratives are viewed as a kind of news-delivery system, then one purpose of them is to deliver information to those who lack an awareness of that information. The request to "Tell me what happened" can be heard as indicating a less knowledgeable position (or K-) by the police. However, subsequent challenges to suspect claims indicate that the police believe themselves to be operating from a more knowledgeable position (or K +). In retrospect this means that the initial request for a narrative is not done for information seeking purposes, but rather for confirmation purposes. This radically shifts the nature of the interaction in terms of who is thought to have *primary ownership over the narrative details. The suspect has to learn that his/her story is not simply his/her story to tell.* The interrogation game thus provides a different set of rules regarding who knows what, and who has the power to relate it. (15, emphasis added)

While the setting of a police interrogation alters the communicative potential in terms of negotiating order and authority, similar practices occur in less structured public encounters when police officers outright reject or ignore responses that they did not want or expect and in the course of the encounter demonstrate exactly who has control of the narratives being presented and established.

and avoiding it being subsumed by institutional roles or concerns—as in the earlier example of an officer providing more detail and information to the friend of his wife. The use of humor at the expense of former police roles—both by police and non-police—serves this goal in that it renders even more absurd or unexpected the prospect of resorting to institutional authority: cases in which a police officer went to greet a friend or acquaintance and was met with a sarcastic "am I under arrest?" or "oh no, what did I do now?" numbered in the dozens and are cliché among police officers. In some cases, these types of responses were used to gauge the type of encounter, essentially asking "business or pleasure?" and the officer's response—not just verbally but in every communicative sense, and especially with body language—would determine if an institutional situation with specific goals was being established which would imply (though not necessarily force) a reliance on institutional authority. The presentation of interaction goals most clearly demonstrates the contrast between institutional and personal authority within a situation—with situational authority essentially falling in between as the institutional role is altered, weakened, or conditionally set aside as the interaction involves more 'everyday' generic interactive forms. Situational authority may involve an attempt to establish an alternate basis for legitimate control of a setting to replace the institutional assumptions that police demands will be met either because citizens are expected to cooperate and, more importantly, if they don't they can legitimately be forced to as required. (cf. Bittner 1970) The capacity to use force may lose its power to resolve situations when police either attempt to negotiate a solution that is acceptable to other involved groups as well as when police are no longer present and not necessarily expected to return soon. This was observed in some cases in which individuals committed violations or demonstrated behavior that was seemingly intended to provoke the police, e.g. crossing the street on foot or by bike against a red light while looking directly at police officers stopped at the intersection, but which was at the same time simply not seen as worth the effort of the officer to get more involved with: both parties seemed to share the assumption that an escalation to the use of coercive means was unlikely (though miscalculations here are also possible, cf. Alpert and Dunham 2004, Peterson 2008), and so the authoritative power of the police based in the institution essentially failed. The idea of situational authority implies that the police can establish an alternate, more-or-less unique to the specific setting, means of maintaining (or delegating) control, and the goals of these respective situations will vary but will also be based in the considerations of institutional objectives or related concerns (cf. Meehan's [1992] depiction of how officers take actions "prevent calls.") Similar to personal authority, a interactional goal—in this case often the overarching purpose for police to choose

to engage in a situation—is specifically to establish or maintain a form of situational authority: police may patrol a specific area and talk to residents in an area or location viewed as potentially problematic with the purpose of ‘normalizing’ their presence—the specific officers, rather than the police in general—and getting of idea of which people—both individually and as a ‘type’—are likely to be found there. Situational authority is often oriented towards establishing an interactional goal of dealing with a conflict, issue, or problem, the boundaries of which are set outside of the specific encounter: repeat visits by the police may not be necessary, if a joint narrative can be established suggesting that the problem will be resolved and that no further police intervention is needed, often at the same time framing police intervention as something undesirable and framing a situational compromise essentially along the lines of, “you don’t want to see us (the police), so you won’t give us a reason to come see you.” The practices of expressly invoking police discretion to give warnings or ‘let someone off the hook’ work this way, communicating a common interactional goal of simply ending the encounter without recourse to institutionally-defined goals or means.

4.7 Managing Authority in Community Contexts

> “When an individual becomes involved in the maintenance of a rule, he tends also to become committed to a particular image of self. In the case of his obligations, he becomes to himself and others the sort of person who follows this particular rule… In the case of his expectations, he comes dependent upon the assumption that others will properly perform such of their obligations as affect him, for their treatment of him will express a conception of him. In establishing himself as the sort of person who treats others in a particular way and is treated by them in a particular way, he must make sure that it will be possible for him to act and be this kind of person.” (Goffman 1967: 50–51)

Formal institutional goals in terms of incidents may often come into conflict not only with the individual officer’s understanding of the situation and desired outcome or the expectations of citizens, but often with the quasi-formal strategic goals of the organization, i.e. in terms of problem-solving or risk management approaches. This means that officers might often purse a more informal goal than would be associated with a strict institutional role, and negotiating the desired outcome would be aided by the establishing of situational authority.

One case demonstrating this occurred during a relatively routine shift with the Revierpolizei. I was accompanying Officer Meyer, and we had already made several planned stops to meet with officials or to discuss ongoing cases. As we

passed by an apartment complex, and without telling me what was going on, Officer Meyer stopped the van and addressed a woman walking alone down the street; it was clear he already knew her, and he made reference to an ongoing case but only vaguely; at the time I was only aware that some police-related issue was being discussed. We both exited the van and Officer Meyer continued the discussion with the woman on the sidewalk—the situation became more clear as it went on, although many details were only filled in afterwards.

The woman had previously been in contact with Officer Meyer, and had expressed her desire to file a complaint against another woman, a neighbor, for allowing her dog to defecate in a cemetery and refusing to clean up after it. The complaint had not yet been filed, and Officer Meyer discussed both the background of the case as well as the likely processes and outcomes that would result from it being filed. The woman had a personal history with the target of the proposed complaint, and evidently complaints had been filed in the past between the two going in both directions. Officer Meyer later commented to me that the two had been friends many years ago, but "because of a man" had a serious falling out, and since then had a mutual animosity serious enough to be known to the police.[21] Already in this basic scenario several relevant practices can be identified: 1) the establishing of the encounter and the form it took ("friendly discussion" more than "bureaucratic incident,") 2) the framing of the encounter within a larger ongoing personal relationship, with a recognized history going back before the start of the immediate encounter or even the police-relevant situation at hand, 3) the framing of the situation as something that is not able to be resolved within the immediate encounter, 4) the lack of a clear shared goal within the encounter coupled with the implication that the situational goal is to be determined by the woman herself, which relates to 5) the acknowledging of a stronger self-determined situational role of the woman, who does not (at this point) fit easily into a specific pre-defined bureaucratic category. Once the woman saw Officer

[21] Cf. Gusfield (1989): "Unrequited love, disappointed friendships, frustrated ambitions, parent-child disputes, biological aging are among the most searing experiences of life, but they have not yet been construed as matters requiring public policy or even capable of being affected by public actions." (431) Officer Meyer seemed to be *privately* considering this encounter as a private dispute based on a 'disappointed friendship' but was lacking an institutional vocabulary or authority to outright reject the issue as something relevant to the police, or else doing so would create other issues specifically with regard to his role as a Revierpolizei officer, and so he must manage to construct a situational narrative and vocabulary to reject taking ownership of this specific issue at this specific time without making a formal institutional decision that may carry over into future contexts. This is in line with Egon Bittner's observation that police become enmeshed in situations simply by their presence, as even choosing not to become more involved can often be interpreted as taking sides.

Meyer inside the van, it was possible for her to contextualize the encounter based on her personal relationship to him based on previous encounters: this possible (but not inevitable) understanding would be further anchored by his demeanor and body language as he approached her and began to discuss the case. While perhaps not a conscious choice as much as one of applying normative behavior to a specific reading of the situation, the officer's eschewal of overt ordering practices and dropping of a more 'anonymous' police persona would additionally establish the type of situation occurring and the forms of negotiation that could take place.

This management of appearances and distancing from the ideal type role—not only through the pre-existing personal / situational relationship, but specifically through the practices of defining the situation only weakly within an institutional framework—was necessary for carefully drawing the boundaries of the negotiation and avoiding either an escalating conflict or the appearances of impropriety. The difficulty in this situation was specifically in the apparent belief by Officer Meyer that filing the complaint would not be helpful, would serve no 'legitimate' concerns, and would only lead to further problems; these are reasonable and defensible points even from an institutional perspective—the filing of the complaint, even if a sign of 'activity' would not benefit Officer Meyer any more than he believed it would benefit the woman or the community in general. At the same time, in his public role as a police officer he is not able to express this quite so directly, as the choice to file is effectively up to the woman alone, and any overt attempt to provide advice could be interpreted—either directly or externally in review—as an attempt to coerce the 'correct' decision. The establishment of a situational role better allowed for a presentation of 'observations' or 'comments' less likely to come across as commands or statements of fact minimizing the decision-making power of the woman.

After discussing the case outside for several minutes, Officer Meyer invited the woman into the 'conference' area in the back of the police van—a dedicated space with opposing seats and a table either for working (on a laptop, filling out paperwork, etc.) or for more private conversations with citizens. The framing of this invitation was important, as this set a standard not just for the dramatization of power—i.e. whether this was truly an invitation, or a command—but it was also establishing a new spatial order. The door of the van was left open to maintain the appearance of 'free' spatial ordering, i.e. that the woman was there by choice and theoretically free to end the conversation and leave at any time.[22] This

[22] One part of this narrative is worth mentioning though not specifically relevant to this specific analysis. The woman became more visibly nervous once the three of us entered the

fit with the offered frame of the situation as a more casual encounter to follow-up and exchange and receive information, rather than a formal incident which needed immediate resolution. At the same time, despite Officer Meyer's role-distancing efforts (almost constituting an 'ideal type' situational encounter, in that all the defining elements of situational encounters were present and no overt practices for maintaining institutional authority were) the 'pull' of the institutional role was present. While the conversation was conducted at a more 'relaxed' level which would not easily be conflated with an interrogation (cf. Reichertz and Schröer 2003, Davis et al. 2017) it would still be identifiable to an outsider or bystander as a 'police encounter,' and while the spatial ordering was not overtly enforced or conflict-oriented, it remained a fully-focused encounter that signified that police-related issues were involved. The formal tense was used for the second-person (which would be normal in most cases barring a close personal relationship or specific circumstances) and Officer Meyer referred to the woman against whom the complaint would potentially be filed by her last name, ("Frau Schmidt") while the other woman simply used the first name. A significant amount of more personal or local information was included in the discussion, particularly in terms of past relationships and encounters, and though it was not all presented in a 'just the facts' style, it was still clearly relevant to the issue at hand. The woman had a friendly demeanor and spoke in a familiar way (though still using formal language) with Officer Meyer but also appeared to be very aware of the possible seriousness of the matter; essentially (in my interpretation) she seemed to be aware that she was still speaking to a police officer involved in the matter and not an advisor, counselor, helper, or friend. To what extent she viewed this situation and the interpersonal relationship fully in terms of situational authority and to what extent her awareness of institutional roles and ideal type images of policing influenced her perceptions of the ongoing situation is a cognitive issue that cannot be further disentangled from the overall situation beyond that which has already been discussed, but the progressing situation and the *presentation* of

van, though she remained friendly with Officer Meyer and offered to the ongoing dialog, rather than simply responding to questions etc. It was evident that she was nervous primarily because the presence of a third, less-engaged, participant did not fit with her conception of the type of semi-formal situational police encounter that was otherwise indicated. This was the first time in the field research in which my presence seemed to significantly impact the course of an encounter in this way, and though it was quickly corrected by Officer Meyer introducing me as an "intern" who was there "just to observe," it prompted more discussion with other officers about the best way to frame my presence within encounters, especially since many Revierpolizei situations similarly were dependent on pre-existing relationships and that individuals were aware that Revierpolizei officers would usually show up alone, and almost never with a non-uniformed stranger.

relations and agency conformed to this conception of situational authority. In the end, the woman expressed that she was having second thoughts about filing the complaint—to the best of my knowledge, no complaint was filed, but it would have been entirely possible for the woman to file the complaint separately even without Officer Meyer's immediate knowledge, though he certainly would have been interested in following up beyond that.

A second case demonstrates drastically different dramaturgical practices of establishing police authority. Two Revierpolizei officers and I had just concluded an unrelated encounter—two officers were present because the involved individual was known to be 'chaotic,' and while not considered to be dangerous, two officers were sent in this case—and were returning to the car. A car left the parking lot, passing us, with four men inside, and one of the officers signaled the driver to pull over, which he did. The officer approached the car, with one moving to the driver side and one to the passenger side. None of the men were wearing seatbelts—at first it had only been clear that the driver wasn't, which was the stated reason for stopping the car. The men were all foreign, which had also been presumed based on the specific parking lot they were leaving, and the driver didn't speak any German; only one passenger, in the back seat, was able to speak German enough to establish a verbal dialogue, though the officer still used gestures to refer to the fact that the driver wasn't wearing a seatbelt.

It was not entirely clear—at least not immediately to me—why the encounter had been started: whether or not the either or both officers had been aware that the driver wasn't wearing a seatbelt before indicating for the driver to pull over was not clear or in any way communicated. While leaving the parking lot the car had accelerated quickly (in my interpretation, not fast enough to be clearly in violation, but sudden and loud enough to draw attention) and this, although not mentioned at all in the encounter, seemed to be at least part of the reason for the stop. At a formally dramatized level, the interactional goal was clear; the police have the responsibility and authority to conduct 'police work' and the individuals being policed receive information on a need-to-know basis. However, in this case even at a dramaturgical level the interaction goal was one that could *only* be effectively dramatized at the institutional level: there was no insinuation that anything was being negotiated, no invocation of 'deeper' problems or social harm, and no overtures towards 'everyday understandings,': while officers often emphasize the *personal* risks of getting caught in violation of the law or public ordinances, e.g. "you're lucky I'm being generous, that could've cost you," in this case no similar rhetoric was used apart from signaling to the driver (with gestures) that he must fasten his seatbelt. Interpreting the 'meaning' of this incident based on the researcher perspective is essentially impossible, in that even accompanying

the police officers and (briefly) discussing it with them immediately afterwards it was impossible to discern exactly *why* the encounter began or proceeded the way it did. Certainly *why* is the wrong question here: the availability of institutional explanations can mask the 'true motives,' even presuming that these were simplistic enough to state outright and separate enough from institutional perspectives to be 'translatable' outside of policing life-worlds. One possible, admittedly heuristic, explanation is that this type of situation—fully dependent on maintaining institutional postures—represents a case of acts as "ends-in-themselves" rather than as "means-to-an-end." (Gusfield 2003: 123) Sometimes the police need to maintain a formalized, identifiable institutional role for the sake of having that role (whether one considers this relevant to maintaining an 'active vocabulary' of roles, practicing professional roles, or simply "because we can") and this case provided a situation which could be engaged in and followed up on in which the institutional role *could* be maintained—the lack of in-depth dialogue and the limited verbal capacities of the others prevented any 'erosion' of the ideal type policing role, the spatial ordering was inherently fixed by the nature of the encounter, and the presence of the police officers outside of the cars, even if necessary for communication, indicated a form of control by implying that the passengers and driver should remain inside the car. The situated meaning of this encounter may have simply been that the men in the car had no standing, within this situation, to negotiate their situation and must simply do as ordered.

This situation stood out primarily for how much it differed from most observed encounters involving the Revierpolizei: random stops of strangers often took on a more conversational tone, and most encounters were planned to some extent, if not with fixed appointments. The fact that men spoke little or no German reduced their ability to negotiate authority or establish their own social roles within the encounter, though this might not always be the case; an encounter earlier the same week involved non-German speaking individuals and required two-step translation using English as a bridge, and though that encounter did not display all the indexical forms of situational authority, it was also not as 'ideally' institutional as the previous example. The fact that the men were inside a car and in public may have also played a role, as there was essentially no situating spatial context here which could be rhetorically leveraged: as Goffman (1971: 5–8) suggests, the more complex codes governing the behavior of pedestrians in public—taking into consideration traffic and free movement as well as communication and signaling—are much more restricted with motor vehicles, where the ability of government to fully enforce acceptable behaviors is relatively unchallenged and the only consistently legitimate purpose for a driver to be in a specific place, with some exceptions, is to be in transit and moving to a destination.

This example also demonstrates the separation between institutional authority as a concept that needs to be dramaturgically presented and institutional structure or formal processes: in the end, the situation was effectively ‘handled’ informally, the driver was—depending on the interpretation—either let off with a warning or had his non-conforming behavior corrected and was free to go, with no official sanctions or record. Though police discretion might often be associated with an appeal to situational authority, this was not the case here.

The managing of authority often perceptibly involved various levels of emotional labor or the regulation of emotional displays. As suggested, emotionality in the expression of happiness or amusement as well as more negative emotions such as anger or bitterness were primarily associated with the indication of more personal or situational narratives, that the officer was not speaking purely as a police officer. The implication is therefore that the institutional role either leaves little room for emotionally-guided comments—whether anger at someone’s actions or amusement or embarrassment in a misunderstanding—or else is actively challenged by them. This analysis runs the risk of tautology, as displays or indications of emotion are seen to challenge the dominance (or effectiveness) of institutional authority but at the same time the presence of these displays is considered suggestive of an appeal to situational or personal authority. However, it should be considered that institutional authority and acting from these roles can be reconciled with emotional displays in various contexts, and while in general the correlation between ‘emotion-indicating’ statements occurring in contexts where institutional authority was either being subverted or downplayed was the norm, officers in many encounters spoke in the vocabulary of emotions or acted in a way suggestive of emotionality rather than the stereotypical ‘calm reasoning’ while still effectively managing the situation under the rubric of the formal institutional frame. For example, while preparing to block off a major road for a parade in the county seat, a driver quickly and suddenly attempted to make it through the intersection rather than become the first to have to wait. The officer first attempted to flag the car to stop but the driver either didn’t see or ignored the signal, but then stopped anyway directly in front of the patrol cruiser as the passing crowd and line of cars from the side-street made the passage tight. The officer, standing outside of the cruiser then aggressively flagged the driver to continue driving, and yelled quite loudly, “Just get out of here!” (notably, using the informal second-person pronoun.) The officer muttered aloud and/or to me, but audible to passers-by, about “idiot.” Once the intersection had been ‘secured’ the task became more semi-formal, as the parade—a procession of children and parents walking to the Christmas Market—and the officer greeted several passing individuals before we needed to move on to the next stop, and then spent the rest

of the evening more informally patrolling (by foot) the main town square where various events and the Christmas Market itself were taking place. The interaction with the driver was a situation in which the institutional and formalized basis of the ‘scene’ was never visually in doubt: the physical iconography of a police officer blocking an intersection and directing traffic to stop unequivocally indicated an attempt to control a situation formally, including the movement of other individuals and regulating access to physical space. The driver of the car tacitly acknowledged this by eventually stopping, but at that point having traveled far enough into the intersection as to make the officers commands essentially obsolete for the new situation—the lack of personal face-to-face communication avoided the potential need to explain or factor in the communicative friction or conflicting intentions that led to this being the case, and the officer simply wanted the car to leave immediately. The outburst and situational labeling of the driver as an ‘idiot’ played a less significant role than it may have in a more engaged face-to-face encounter, but could also be interpreted (specifically and most relevantly from the perspective of the driver) as an indication of seriousness and that the officer essentially ‘means business,’ that the emotionality of this micro-interaction was still related to broadly identifiable policing concerns and not overtly a challenge or conscious withdraw from an institutionally-derived authority. The officer essentially displayed his annoyance within the context of performing representative (to the point of stereotypical) police work and took no further actions that could supplement this utterance to suggest that the officer was ‘acting out of anger’ or acting primarily as an individual shorn from a policing frame.[23] The broader setting in this case—the presence of the police in the city during a parade and community event—allowed, as such situations often do, for a more prominent and yet less contextually obvious police presence: the police could primarily rely on their presence alone to enforce the already existing norms governing the procession, and the ‘awkward’ situation of the driver entering the intersection when it was being actively constructed as ‘restricted space’ could be situationally constructed as a violation of immediate on-the-street social norms, a violation of more formal policing goals (specifically in that it could have been

[23] A similar example, drawn from personal experience and of an entirely different situated nature, could further illuminate this case of potential image/role strain. In the US in the winter of 2007 a police officer knocked on my door and greeted me with “move your fucking car!” and instantly turned away, returned to his car, and waited until I moved my car from the street to the driveway. Lacking a personal or recurring relationship to this officer or any suggestion that the formal boundaries of the encounter (regardless of manner or tact) were inappropriate, this is ostensibly still primarily an invocation of institutional authority, though maintaining the ideal role and image promoted by the institution itself is clearly not the officer’s priority.

more formally perceived as a challenge to authority) and as the actions of an "idiot." This type of encounter is in many ways suggestive of police liminality (see Wada et al. 2010), the existing of policing roles essentially as consistently both individuals and as formalized constructs, as the officer was both able to interact with individuals as part of the event (even, in a way, as part of the scenery), able to intervene with full police powers, but, by virtue and general knowledge of these powers will often not need to actually intervene beyond the tiniest invocation of the suggestion of action, and is still free to offer or share in everyday attributions of the relative competence of others.

4.8 Managing Situations: Prevention

Ethnographic work on police discretion has demonstrated how officers manage not just practices within situations, but even their visibility and very presence. (Meehan 1982, Rowe 2007) Police officers are aware of the effect their formal definitional authority can have on public situations, even in the simplest of 'encounters.' This can be seen in cases where the police actively avoid situations where their presence or attention could be interpreted as 'observing for criminal activity' even when that is not the intent of the officers, either by avoiding entering a certain location (e.g. a bar or club where their presence might be disruptive) or by avoiding any sign of participating in an encounter. The police are able to assess a situation to identify risks or any type of behavior that they think might warrant intervention without initiating a type of encounter that might provoke conflict. (cf. Demaree 2017)

On several occasions while driving past or near the train station in the county capital officers would point out to me that the local 'bums' ("Penner") hung out in the area and usually drank alcohol in a small park in the afternoon or even late morning.[24] Most notable, however, was that while clearly noticing the group of four or five men, the officer or officers never actively stared or even obviously

[24] Unlike most jurisdictions in the US and UK, consuming alcohol in public is only rarely regulated in Germany and then in very specific locations and contexts. While alcohol very often plays a role in how police define situations and actors—as in the present example—the presence of alcohol alone is generally not sufficient to define a situation, unlike the example presented by Meehan (1992) in which a significant amount of police work revolved around youth and public alcohol consumption, and in which the difference between underage drinking and of-age alcohol consumption was mostly irrelevant and would often be treated the same way. The two examples in this chapter involving groups colloquially described as "Penner", "bums" or "alcoholics" by the police were the only prominent observed cases in which alcohol played a significant and immediate role in defining a group as worthy of specific

looked in their direction. In contrast, the men in the park most often stared at and followed the police car until we were out of sight.

The use of *gaze* is "one of the principal indicators by which participants assess that they are being taken into consideration by another." (Kidwell 2006: 748) By avoiding eye contact, but still being visibly present even by simply passing by, the officer injects a certain ambiguity or uncertainty into the encounter—which may not even be considered an encounter at all, and apart from the comments made to me inside the police car, there was no obvious indication that the men were brought to the officer's attention. The role ascribed to others by the officers is either undefined or unclear, as it may not be clear to which extent the police are even paying attention or prepared to respond: similar observations have been made with regard to the use or mirrored sunglasses by police officers. (Boyanowsky and Griffiths 1982) Any attempt to respond to the officer's presence by the men could easily be overlooked or ignored; the men were essentially robbed of the chance to perform any aligning actions. (cf. Stokes and Hewitt 1976) There was no (stated) reason to believe the men were doing anything illegal, and yet even making eye contact with anyone in the group might be enough to establish a form of encounter which might require further communication of negotiation over what is going on. From the perspective of the police, simply driving by and being aware of the group's presence was considered to be an effective enough check, while any closer scrutiny might theoretically lead to a situation which obligates the police to go in for a closer look and initiate a face-to-face encounter. The men in the park had no 'official' reason to believe their presence was being challenged, evaluated, or morally judged, while at the same time they were likely more acutely aware of the passing of a police car than most residents would be based on prior encounters with the police and the fact that the men were "polizeibekannt", that is, known to police. The police in this case avoided a direct challenge, but also did not directly give legitimacy to the presence of the men or their actions because the narrative that the police simply did not see them, however implausible, remains as a possibility. The men would have no effective recourse if the police car suddenly turned around and the officers demanded to search them or instructed them to leave the area, but because this has not happened they would also have little reason to expect it, assuming they don't give the officers any additional reasons to think their behavior or presence merited scrutiny. In this sense, two policing functions were accomplished

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attention; in the other cases where alcohol was 'in play' it was treated as a normal and fitting part of the broader situation rather than a major component of a 'moral contest', e.g. at a Christmas Market or even just on the street near a bar in the evening. (cf. Gusfield 1996)

through this relatively simple practice: identifying or observing potential risks (from the perspective of the police); and establishing a presence for the purposes of prevention and social control.

A similar policing practice is described by Meehan (1992: 463) as “showing yourself,” in which police feel the need to be seen by the portions of the population they consider likely to cause problems or that need to be ‘controlled’: in the cited case this is primarily teenagers and young adults in American suburbs, where underage and public drinking is common but complaints from neighbors due to teenagers simply being in public are equally common. In that example, the presence of the police alone is seen as an intentional provocation both by the officers and by the citizens, due to the lack of power by the mostly underage residents, and direct (and sometimes inconsistent) statements of warning by officers directed at teenagers assumed to be engaged in undesired behavior were common. The case at hand differed, in that police tended to avoid direct interaction and the behavior of the men was not visibly or clearly illegal. The police in Falkenmark did not necessarily seek the men out, but were simply driving past and noticed them, while also avoiding giving the obvious impression of surveilling the group. The suburban US officers observed by Meehan described their goals as ‘preventing calls’ for service by managing public behavior that might cause offense to individuals likely to call the police—even if by simply moving that behavior to a less visible spot or out of their jurisdiction entirely—while the Revierpolizei officers work is less driven by calls for service and, as discussed, the presence of the men and their behavior seems to be less likely to warrant complaints or demands for action that will directly impact the officers, though it is still ‘of interest.’

It is within a discussion of situational proprieties that Erving Goffman introduces his concept of “civil inattention” (1963: 83) He contrasts a “more proper in most situations” civil inattention with a “hate stare” or a “not seeing” which effectively treats the other party as a nonperson. Civil inattention instead is seen as a courtesy in which the presence of the other person is acknowledged while also making it clear that no special scrutiny is being applied:

> By according civil inattention, the individual implies that he has no reason to suspect the intentions of the others present and no reason to fear the others, be hostile to them, or wish to avoid them. (At the same time, in extending this courtesy he automatically opens himself up to a like treatment from others present.) This demonstrates that he has nothing to fear or avoid in being seen and being seen seeing, and that he is not ashamed of himself or of the place and company in which he finds himself. (84)

Police encounters, like most social encounters, are not simply a back-and-forth exchange of communication. (Ericson et al. 1993) Even in cases where responses

are awaited, commands are given and enforced, deeper meanings and implications between each act will be interpreted by all involved in the encounter in any level. The choice of which participants in the encounter are allowed to provide accounts will weigh heavily in understandings of who is being treated as a problem or irritation, and action that could reasonably be taken solely for the sake of organizing the situation, e.g. asking a participant or witness to wait somewhere out of earshot of the ongoing conversation, can have vastly different undertones. (Kidwell 2006) The decision whether to discuss certain matters with individuals on the street or inside the police vans could often be critical in establishing what type of discussion was being had.

A form of intimate coordination takes place once an encounter has taken on a recognizable or predicable form in which all participants have some ideas about, essentially, what is going on; though these forms can vary from ‘casual conversations’ to official interrogations (cf. Reichertz and Schröer 2003, Davis et al. 2017) in every case it is necessary that this structure be established and tentatively—though usually non-verbally—agreed upon. This includes understandings of how policing authority is being constructed and implemented, i.e. more abstract and based on the institution of policing, based on more immediate or situational understandings based on the ongoing or previous encounters, or based on existing personal relationship. Individuals may feel themselves at risk, or at risk of hurting others, by revealing certain information to police officers, particularly those who they perceive primarily as a police officer rather than as an individual. Often this harm is minimized or countered by the use of not just accounts but also by vocabularies of neutralization (cf. Maruna and Copes 2005), such as by first describing an individual as ‘aggressive’ and then reformulating the sentence to state, “well, he seemed a bit weird anyway.” Engaging individuals through different practices can elicit different forms of information, and often downplay the immediate assumptions inherent in the presence of a (symbolic) police officer, allowing the officer to interact more as an individual, i.e. appealing to personal and situational authority: allowing for ‘deeper’ emotional work, personal relationships, and differing forms of social capital to come into play.

The practices of ‘civil inattention’ here represent one manner of relying on, if not specifically invoking, institutional authority as a way to control situations socially. Civil inattention can avoid the problem of institutional roles ‘eroding’ as interactions become more complex, dynamic, and less ritualized. As the police are essentially relying on their presence from a distance as an interpretable symbol, they are denying the others a chance to establish an alternate meaning (e.g. along the lines of situational authority.) ‘Distancing’ practices in general will tend to reinforce institutional authority to the extent that this source of authority is the

default in police-citizen encounters, though exceptions could certainly be found in cases where, for example, an off-duty police officer is stopped by a colleague who did not recognize him at first. Situational authority could potentially be mutually recognized in a similar case if the officer had previously made himself personally known to the individuals, had made it clear that it was his jurisdiction and expressed his general expectations of what is acceptable behavior, and if the individuals were able to individually recognize the officer simply from his driving by, either by identifying him inside the car of by specific markings, etc.

The situation involving those in the group could be contrasted with other situations where others similarly described as “Penner” or “Alkoholiker” were greeted or treated informally and closer to friendly than cold or distant: some of these encounters seemed to even involve the same individuals, though notably informal engagement seemed to then be limited to when individuals were on their own and traveling. One man was pointed out by Officer Hermann on several occasions and sometimes greeted as he rode his bike through the city: Officer Hermann told me that the man “always rides to the store to buy one beer, and then rides back to the park to drink it, and then back to the store.” His behavior was obviously well known to the officer, and he was portrayed in this context more as a ‘known local entity’ than a problem. At the same time, approaching or engaging with the man while he was actively drinking, rather than riding down the street, would be more likely to either suggest a formalized policing encounter and put the man on the defensive or to tacitly legitimize and demonstrate police acceptance for his behavior and presence, while only selectively engaging with him in transit or in other ‘temporary contexts’ both establishes the grounds for selective and situation authority and reserves the right of the officer to unironically invoke formal definitions at any point.

4.9 Policing Public Events

One specific planned task performed by the Revierpolizei was monitoring and attending public events, such as festivals, parades and sporting events. There were two stated purposes for involving the Revierpolizei: the officers could better evaluate the type of event and the ‘atmosphere’ to determine what type of police presence might be required, and that these events were good opportunities to improve police-community relations and to maintain a good relationship with local organizations and clubs, key individuals and the community in general.

Public events such as seasonal festivals, parades, political rallies and demonstrations play a significant role in community life in Germany. (Putnam 2002)

Managing these events—through crowd-control strategies and tactics but also through administrative-bureaucratic actions such as issuing permits, planning routes and involving community organizations—can affect how the police are viewed by the community—as hostile or benevolent, involved or detached, communicative or stoic—as well as affecting or legitimizing the events and the movements behind them. (Della Porta and Fillieule 2004) While protests, unplanned demonstrations and riots draw the most media and scholarly attention, more 'uneventful' events can serve the function of establishing normal, normative relations between police and public, where the police, rather than simply defining the spatial borders of an event or taking on an oppositional role, can intermingle with attendees or even be seen as participants themselves.

During my field stay, I attended several such events along with the Revierpolizei—generally following a similar plan of arriving early to scout out the area and make preliminary estimations of the expected crowd as well as any potential for conflict, making recommendations or requests for additional support, attending the event in a more participatory role while remaining in contact with certain stakeholders or organizers, and remaining until any assumed potential for conflict has passed or enough attendees have left so that a significant on-site police presence is not seen as necessary. These events ranged from relatively short one-day activities taking place over several hours to multi-day festivals such as the annual Christmas Market which lasts for several weeks. Apart from political marches and one larger music festival primarily drawing a crowd from outside of the immediate area, few of these events were seen by the Revierpolizei officers as presenting much of a risk in terms of violence or crime, with public order and general safety, as well as the opportunities in terms of community-relations, being the primary concerns. Unlike similar festivals and public events in the US and UK, even 'family-friendly' events in Germany tend to attract a heterogeneous mix of age groups including teenagers and adults without children and almost always include alcohol.

4.9.1 The Big Game

One such event took place during a week-long stay in one of the largest towns in the county in the summer. A 'friendship match' between a ranked Bundesliga[25] team and a local soccer club had been planned as part of a larger celebration. The

[25] The Bundesliga (literally: federal league) is the top soccer / association football league in Germany, consisting of 18 teams.

town's soccer field and facilities were bolstered by various temporary stands and wagons offering food and drink, and additional bleachers set up for the expected higher-than-usual turnout.

I accompanied Officer Hermann, one of three Revierpolizei officers specifically assigned to the specific city district. We arrived while the event was still being set up, and although in theory only the organizers or those working at the event should have been present, it was far from empty, apparently because of the various community connections; many people already present seemed to be friends or family of those with a more 'official' reason for their presence. Walking through the area, we greeted or stopped to talk with various people—a few were known to me, including the spouse of another Revierpolizei officer who was working a food stand, but most people were known to Officer Hermann but new to me and I was only introduced to a handful of new people at this point—eventually we met up with Officer Schütz, also of the Revierpolizei, and there was a brief discussion about the expected turnout and whether or not the previous estimation of what type of additional police support would be needed should be altered. It was decided that this estimation was reasonable and that two squads of officers from the Bereitschaftpolizei, or BePo—the crowd-control division (which in most German states, including Brandenburg, is also used as a continuing training unit for officers leaving the police academy)—would be sent.

We moved casually around the field and between the stands as the crowd grew in size. Surprisingly to me, many people approached Officer Hermann to say hello or make small talk, sometimes tapping him on the shoulder from behind, using physical contact to get his attention. Small talk took place joking about the role of the police, e.g. "I hope you don't have to arrest me!" or "oh no, it's the police!" used as opening lines or icebreakers. Other topics of discussion included the ongoing week-long celebrations and the other planned events, personal matters (most of which I was 'out of the loop' on and didn't specifically involve police work) and the weather, generally not going into much detail. The presence of the individual police officers seemed relevant—with a dozen or so people coming up to greet Officer Hermann before the game started—and significant possibly in a symbolic way beyond the substance of any communication: to what extent this is based on Officer Hermann's social role as a Revierpolizist, or on specific individual interpersonal relationships seems impossible to disentangle, and even though his presence at this point was official and formally one of a police officer, apart from the jokes described above the types of interactions I observed were in no way essentially policing actions.

Eventually the Bereitschaftpolizei arrived—two squads each of about 6 or 7 officers in two vans. There was another brief discussion with the apparent squad

leaders and the Revierpolizei officers, and the BePo squads took up positions on opposite corners of the grounds. Although the specific tactics hadn't come up in any discussion that I was present for, one squad took a position forming a line, hands behind their back in a military-esque posture, and remained that way for most of the match. The other squad mostly remained inside their van with the door open, taking turns to have one officer stand outside the van to observe the situation, with the officer on watch generally leaning against a railing. Despite seeming like two extremes of policing approaches to the task at hand, I didn't witness any comment or criticism by any of the Revierpolizei officers.

Along with Officer Hermann I watched the game and occasionally we circled around the field or back towards the parking lot, but nothing particularly noteworthy occurred until the end of the game (the home team, as expected, lost.) At the end of the game both BePo units assisted in clearing the crowd, and came into what seemed to be a—and was communicated to me by Officer Hermann as a recurring—potential conflict situation. Approximately ten 'fans'—one officer would later describe the group as "wannabe hooligans"—who seemed to be drunk remained in a section of the stands and continued to sing, chant and yell with the apparent attempt of provoking the police. The group—all men and closer towards middle-aged than 'youth'—became louder and more focused on using conventional derogatory terms for the police, the equivalent of "pigs." The two Bereitschaftpolizei units, accompanied by two Revierpolizei officers, simply stood in a line in front of the bleachers with the same military posture held by one unit during the game, but the individual officers scanned the scene looking either to the left or right: the officers apparently made conscious efforts to not look directly at the group as they tried to provoke them. One-by-one the members of the group gave up and left, some first approaching the police line but without successfully provoking any overt reaction by the Bereitschaftspolizei officers, and after about 15 minutes the stands had been cleared and the officers began to return to the vans.

The event in its entirety, and especially the (non-)incident at the end of the game illustrates several policing practices related to either maintaining an institutional or personal authority role, as well as reinforcing both the generalist aspects of the Revierpolizei role in determining policing demands within their community and specialist aspects in managing formal and informal policing roles in communication with that community.

4.9.2 Spatial Ordering, Indicators of Control, and Civil Inattention

Police authority or legitimacy was at no point overtly or verbally invoked in the described scenario. Neither the Revierpolizei nor the Bereitschaftpolizei officers ever specifically gave orders to any member of the public or even gave any direct instructions for the crowd to disperse. The authority of the police, and the style of 'order' that authority appeared set to enforce, was visible at a more symbolic level, in relation to actions—or in this case lack of action—by the police. The officers, by strictly maintaining and enforcing a social distance—by refusing to verbally negotiate or engage, and the use of facing to make it clear that the police viewed the group *as something that needed to be dealt with,* but not necessarily through verbal communication or overt negotiation—drew on the assumed institutional authority which implied that they *could* escalate or intervene if necessary. The use of civil inattention by the BePo officers avoided the need to defend or enforce that authority—the challenge was essentially to the 'hooligan' group to accept it or actively deny it by escalating their behavior, in which case it would (presumably) be understood by both sides that the formal institutional definition of the situation would 'kick in' and any leeway that the group held in terms of negotiating their own resolution might be lost as the police re-defined the situation to remove any semblance of power or agency from everyone else.

Notable here is the implied view of the 'hooligans' that civil inattention by the police towards them is in some way already provocative or irritating. While Goffman considers civil inattention to be a more general social rule for how strangers interact when nothing significant connects them apart from proximity, the police are expected to show interest or concern for certain types of behavior, and without delving too far into the realm of the psychological, it may be fair to assume that the displayed behavior was intended specifically to not only gain attention but specifically the attention of the police. (cf. Müller 2013, Stott et al. 2018) Despite their attempts, the members of the group were unable to transform the situation into an overt conflict beyond what was already occurring—the type of police presence, specifically the facing and arrangement of a line of officers directly in front of the stands—made clear that the event was over and that the group was expected to disburse and leave, but the lack of any 'communicative offers' by the police left the group with no alternatives other than to continue what they were doing, escalate and risk a similar escalation by the police, or to leave and possibly save face only because they had not been *officially* instructed. While very little may have been at stake in this case compared to examples such as public

demonstrations or cases where arrest or violence seem more likely, the symbolic power of the police presence and gaze was effectively demonstrated. Communication between the two groups—the 'hooligans' and the police—was two-way, but only in the sense that the hooligans communicated with overt, (primarily) verbal communication, while the police communicated through symbolism and normative action. This form of communication, framed within a context that identifies the situation as manifest, i.e. the police are actively aware and visible as 'working' and concerned with what is happening, lets the institutional authority of the police speak for itself.

The involvement of the BePo officers here also transforms the situation due to the specific role they are intended to perform: BePo officers are intended for crowd control and managing the public in a generalized way, but not specifically for 'problem-solving' or community relations tasks. The BePo work essentially on a case-by-case basis and not only is their authority primarily institutional, but they are intended to function as a unit rather through individual dynamics. They leave once the potential for future conflict has been estimated to be sufficiently reduced, and their use of civil inattention in this case can be assumed to be tactical rather than strategic: their goals are short term rather than long term. The use of similar techniques by officers with a fixed geographic territory, in particular the Revierpolizei, can present differing meanings in that the officer may have a more individual or personal relationship with those involved, rather than a more typological approach as seen here, in which the individuals are treated based on their actions and appearances in the moment. Bittner describes how police officers' understanding of people on skid row was heavily based on skid row residents being "of radically reduced visibility." (1967: 706) The assumption there was that if problems weren't dealt with immediately, the offender or 'problem person' might simply vanish and continue to cause problems at a later time or somewhere else. This assumption is also functionally different from the situation described by Meehan (1992) in which teenagers *could* in most cases be easily located either at home or at whatever spot was being used as a hangout at the time, and so it was less important to deal with the behavior itself than it was to deal with the visibility of that behavior.

The bureaucratic and administrative assumption in Germany is that almost all residents are accurately registered at their current address and in almost every case, barring serious and immediate threats of physical harm, can be contacted or apprehended later on. The relationship between the police officers, as individuals, to the public, as individuals, is relevant here as well, as an officer applying civil attention may not simply be indicating, "I don't want to see you right now" but at the same time may be implying, "but I may be able to see you later." This relays an immediate invocation of situational authority, but one in which

the more formal institutional role of the police is still identifiable, and while interactional goals are structured over a longer scale and less-incident based, formal institutional concerns are still in the forefront. Civil attention was often observed in cases, including in the current example, where it was indicated to me that the target individuals, and their behavior, were well known to police; that is, these individuals were seen as 'high visibility,' and the use of civil inattention seems to assume that the individuals themselves are aware of their visibility to the police. While the BePo officers themselves had little or no connection to this community or to these offenders, they were operating alongside the Revierpolizei officers who did, and therefore dealing with the situation in this way did not necessarily preclude it affecting future situations or interactions involving this group or these individuals and the police within the community. The establishing of a 'weak' situational authority here was based on the presumed effectiveness of the institutional role at communicating (in a way that could alter behavior, at least for as long as the person thinks they may be observed) simply through visible presence, but the strategic use of that presence without formally defining an incident (i.e. by directly engaging participants or attempting to demonstrate physical control of the space) constitutes an appeal to situational authority to establish a common, if unstated, understanding: I may be watching, but I don't want to see anything I shouldn't see. Whether the individual further interprets this as "I shouldn't do anything that might get me in trouble" or "I shouldn't do anything in a place or time where I might get in trouble" is a question of tactics and strategy, but this process demonstrates how managing their various perceived roles can serve, and, in some contexts or if improperly managed, undermine, the ability of the police to have the effect they want to have on behavior in public.

4.9.3 Defining Participation

As in this example, police encounters often fall into the realm of "fully-focused gatherings" (Goffman 1961, 1963). Any other activity or action has its meaning altered or transformed to be re-contextualized into the ongoing police encounter, and even continuing the same behavior that was ongoing prior to the arrival—or attention—of the police may be seen as a provocation or challenge, e.g. in the case of a noise complaint at a party, where the participants are expected to turn the music down immediately upon recognizing that police officers have arrived, even if the police deem the volume levels to be acceptable or only provide a warning. Even as the police take actions that demonstrate their unwillingness to engage in verbal communication, their presence offers meaning and suggests one specific

purpose of the presence of the police in the specific space that they occupy: to coerce the group to leave and ensure that they do. Unlike other forms of social encounters, the relevance of the police authority and ability to define situations in an enforceable manner means that choice of participation in a situation is often up to the police themselves. Bystanders for the most part need to remain at a significant distance, continue moving, or else may tacitly become part of the engagement even if in an undefined role.[26] Individuals may approach the police or attempt to engage with them, but ultimately it is up to the police to determine who has the right to provide information, present their version of accounts, or rebut or clarify conflicting accounts. The attempts to engage the police in this case lacked any characteristics that might have led to a more interactive dialog, as the type of behavior and communication never fundamentally veered from its 'non-serious' character, none of the participants attempted to negotiated one-on-one with the police and all communicative offers were presented loudly and in a way intended to be heard by all parties at once. This was a clear attempt by the police to maintain an authority derived from institutional legitimacy, as well as evidence for how this type of authority relies less on verbal negotiation than on the use of symbols and presence, i.e. institutional authority as the default assumption by all participants. While in other observed cases more 'reasonable' individuals were able to separate from the group and out of earshot of the others, provided accounts or apologies, and were able to attempt to negotiate, this case was one in which neither party made any overtures likely to be immediately accepted by the other, and, to paraphrase Bittner (1974), the police always win. The constraints and assumptions of the broader context had already defined that the event—and the tolerance of certain types of behavior that accompanied it—was over, and the police saw no need to overtly negotiate. The police had successfully established their presence and immediate goals as more legitimate, essentially supplanting a competing social world without needing to directly engage with or challenge their values; the conflict remained one of authority and legitimacy. (Strauss 1982b) By disregarding the 'hooligans' but still maintaining a visible and unavoidable presence they were able to successfully define the situation.

[26] As a field researcher, this became relevant in some cases. While I was able to 'break the rules' and attempt to remain neutral in some types of encounters, it was impossible to take on a bystander role in the way Goffman (1963: 156–165) discusses, as I made no attempt to feign disinterest and was able to remain in the situation without being directly engaged, questioned or challenged: this most likely labeled me to most observers as 'with the police', and on the few cases where a police officer unknown to me treated me as an 'outsider,' one of the officers known to me intervened to justify my presence.

At the same time, the police are not entirely free to disregard citizen pleas or ignore anything they do not wish to deal with. The police, while in theory not obligated to provide accounts of their decisions or interpretations of situations to citizens, face pressure and expectations to clarify and thereby essentially adjudicate what, in an almost official verdict, is going on. This constitutes a push towards institutional roles and authority, at last based on citizen expectations, which is often ‘countered’ by the use of practices to establish situational authority; police can eschew or downplay strict institutional expectations (i.e. how the citizen might perceive the institutional role) by making it clear that the decision of whether to even treat the situation as an *incident* is one made by the responding officer and refusing to take any stronger (punitive) measures at the time. Invoking situational authority in this manner conspicuously asserts the right of the officer to revert to strict institutional authority at any time and potentially for reasons only interpretable to the police; this manner of expressing situational authority attempts to encourage cooperation by making it clear that an appeal to involve the police in formal decision making—e.g. one engaged participant encouraging an officer to arrest or question another participant—could make the situation (in terms of negotiating power and ability to influence outcomes) worse for *everyone* involved. This case stood out primarily for the lack of verbal negotiation about what was going on, presumably because both sides of this standoff were already aware of what was ‘really’ happening and the conclusion was already foregone. Civil inattention is effective primarily when the target group or individuals are not only able to interpret the presence of the police as implying certain possibilities and outcomes, but specifically when they have no choice but to consider those possibilities. Whether the individual behavior is something specifically illegal, such as underage drinking, or simply something undesirable and seen as likely to lead to an order to disburse (“Platzverweis”), the tension lies in the distance between the current actions of the police—remaining generally passive but still present—and the potential and even likely actions if certain, imagined, conditions are met. By not explicitly indicating these conditions—i.e. by specifically not telling the individuals that they need to leave within 30 minutes, or once their beers are empty—the police remain free to intervene more ‘aggressively’ at any moment and essentially for any reason, while the targets of this form of civil inattention are forced between maintaining group without any specific negotiating demands or separating from the group to individually provide accounts or explanations. Practices which emphasize an overt negotiation rather than coercion—those attempting to establish situational authority—may restrict the ability to make immediate demands or give orders, if the police have previously made

overtures in the form of 'requests' or provided alternatives but the alternative preferred by the police was not chosen. While a 'fallback' to relying on institutional authority is always possible, this would often require police officers to contradict themselves or weaken their own position or to negotiate further; Meehan (1992) however, observed suburban police officers often first making 'situational' agreements and then retracting them, ostensibly with the goal of keeping teenagers nervous and wary of the police and therefore less likely to come to the attention of either the police or those who might call the police. This form of 'unpredictable' negotiating with stated police expectations changing from situation to situation over the course of several encounters was not observed in the case at hand.

Discussions of civil inattention and similar practices have generally focused on its use in creating boundaries, or in 'insulating' social groups from one another. (cf. Lyman and Scott 1967, Strauss 1982b) However, its use by the police seems to be more complex than simply avoiding contact—the police are uniquely capable of legitimizing or sanctioning 'borderline' types of behaviors, i.e. things that may not be strictly illegal but may be considered by some to be undesirable, things that may be illegal but with no demand for police intervention, or behaviors that might not be strictly problematic on their own but might be considered by police or onlookers to bear other associations that might become something the police will directly deal with. This is relevant in maintaining the balance of police intervention in cases of community interest with institutional and legal concerns. (Ericson 1982, Waldeck 1999)

4.10 Public Space, Community Space and Ordered Space

Lyman and Scott (1967) describe public spaces as:

> those areas where the individual has freedom of access, but not necessarily of action, by virtue of his claim to citizenship. These territories are officially open to all, but certain images and expectations of appropriate behavior and of the categories of individuals who are normally perceived as using these territories modify freedom. First, it is commonly expected that illegal activities and impermissible behavior will not occur in public places. Since public territories are vulnerable to violation in both respects, however, policemen are charged with the task of removing lawbreakers from the scene of their activities and restricting behavior in public places. (237–238)

They further describe how these *public territories* are considered at least temporally inaccessible or unwelcoming for certain categories of people: e.g. children on a playground after midnight, or minorities in white neighborhoods. These

caveats challenge the *public* assumptions of these public territories, and for the purposes of discussing the role of the police they may be better described as "community territories." Negotiations over community territories are processes of identifying insiders and outsiders. (cf. Sack 1993)

The purpose and assumed role of the immediate police presence once the game ended was affected not just by the actions of the police in moving but also by the various background activities—the walking out of players and officials, the closing of food and drink stands, and the gradual emptying out of the crowd. The presence of the line of BePo officers in front of the bleachers now indicated a fully-focused gathering, where for any member of the 'hooligan' group to ignore the fact that the officers were there or the obvious implications would make the participant seem disingenuous or socially ignorant. The situation had been effectively transformed from a "multifocused situation", where the specifically connotated meaning of one or more police officers was more dependent on immediate interpersonal relationships and interaction, to "one that is exhausted by one face engagement." (Goffman 1963: 164) This corresponds with a transformation from public space to *policed space*: even as the 'stand-off' between the police and the group dragged on, dozens of others continued to mill about around the soccer field, but by tacitly acknowledging that the situation was 'winding down,' or in a state of flux, these others rightfully did not see themselves as a target of the implicit police message to disperse, and for the most part did not need to legitimize their continued presence: this group was likely made up of a mixture of employees, family, friends and simple stragglers taking the long way home, but it never became relevant to any police-related interaction. The 'hooligan' group, on the other hand, presented a clear form of resistance by *escalating* their behavior, at least in comparison to the remainder of the attendees, instead of signaling a willingness to leave sooner rather than later.

Manning (2003) writes that:

> Policing selectively marks that which is notable, sustains it by repeatedly marking the same types of behaviors and making them visible to others, and re-marks on the sustainability of such conventions. The institution provides the language within which the risk or contingency is described. Exaggerated and simple police typifications are often cited as tools of the trade. (20; cf. Reiner 1992)

Defining behavior as undesirable, as something that *should be ordered*, does not necessarily require the police to intervene against that behavior; positioning themselves in a certain way, as embedded within the community, as arbiters of moral correctness, if performed effectively, means that the police can force

actors engaged in that behavior to position themselves as (situational, at least at first) outsiders. Even as outsiders, it is presumed that these individuals, like most of those who come into contact with the police, have been "educated to format their questions and respond verbally and bodily to commands, requests, and suggestions." (Manning 2003: 20) The institutional framing of policing at this level is less oriented on the physical practices of taking control, but rather on the symbolic imagery of police boundary work and divisions into insiders and outsiders. The moral practices of policing are here essentially the control strategy.

A consistent finding in the sociology of policing has been that police work is performed differently, different services are offered, and different situations are considered routine or unique, dependent on the neighborhood, or, more specifically, how the neighborhood is perceived by officers. (Banton 1964, Bittner 1967, Wilson 1968, Feest and Blankenburg 1972, Muir 1979, Black 1980, Ericson 1982, Smith 1986, Herbert 1996, De Lint 2000, Marks 2004) The expectations held by officers of how their presence should be reacted to, conversely, is determined by the neighborhood, which in turn serves as a proxy for the type of people believed to live or spend time there. (Sampson and Raudenbush 2004) Hunold et al. (2016) argue that police officers often fall victim to the *ecological fallacy*, in which they make determinations about individuals based to a large extent on assumed characteristics of the neighborhood and location, a concern that has played a major role in many critiques of the basic criminal justice model and of the assumption that police can equally and equitably enforce order. (Waegel 1981, Bittner 1990, Crank 1994, Waldeck 1999, Harcourt 2001, Christie 2004, Aden 2012, Huey and Ricciardelli 2015, Behr 2018) This becomes especially problematic as police do not *formally* distinguish between neighborhoods or spatially-determined norms, apart from at the strategic level i.e. in determining jurisdictions, assigning officers, or specific policing initiatives (cf. Sparrow 2016), but rather determine what is normal or acceptable in certain public spaces at certain times—and implicitly by specific individuals, groups, or demographics. Yet the police do approach different spaces significantly differently, particularly in terms of neighborhoods and different parts of cities—because of the dynamic of police encounters, this can often mean that the neighborhood determines the outset of the interaction, i.e. police in areas believed to be crime-prone, dangerous, or suspicious are more likely to maintain an institutional posturing and only negotiate when it can provide leverage. As Manning (2003) states, "within known areas of 'trouble,' [police] may drive more slowly, stop and talk to people, search them" (207); the *default* approach is indicated by a complexity of factors but dominant among them are the expectations of the dynamics between place and individuals.

Those engaged in suspicious behavior by virtue of being out of place—i.e. teenagers in a park at night, ‘street people’ in a higher-end shopping district—may simply be ‘reminded’ of the existence of the police, i.e. ‘showing oneself’ or a ‘show of force.’ Notably, being out of place is a function of space *and* time, as in the case of the ‘hooligans’ who could only be effectively dramatized as out of place once the game had ended and the majority of the crowd either dispersed or took actions to indicate that the event was over. The general presumption in this case is that the exhibited behavior, even if it is merely the presence of an individual or a group, conflicts with the norms governing the social space, and while the police do not need to, and realistically may not truly be able to, appeal to the community for support, the presence of observers or outsiders was not constructed as a risk by the police to the extent that their behavior itself demonstrated the ‘wrongness’ of the behavior being targeted by the police: the police did not need to escalate the clearing of the crowd after the game or warn friends and family against hanging around, because the change in the overall situation signaled that the event was ‘winding down’ and, complimentary with the presence but lack of direct action of the police, indicated that the ‘hooligan’ group’s behavior was essentially unsustainable—even if they had been allowed to stay, the event and atmosphere would disappear around them further highlighting the difference between their public attitudes and level of excitement and that of the departing crowd.

In other cases, individuals or groups are considered suspicious purely due to being in an area or setting that is generally considered suspicious. While very few neighborhoods in Falkenmark were outright labeled as ‘problematic’ by the Revierpolizei, some settings were either specifically claimed to be ‘chaotic’ or risky, or else were approached as if they were. Some specific buildings had a reputation for being unfriendly to the presence of the police, and the mannerisms of the officers both when approaching the location and within interactions there was very different—for example, bystanders or observers were kept in sight rather than being obviously ignored or even greeted, as occurred in many ‘trusted’ locations. The basic assumption governing these situations seems to be that the potential conflict lies not between the individuals and the community, but rather between the broader community and the specific local environment, though this binary would only fit to the most extreme examples. In many cases ‘problematic’ locations (particularly those described based on specific individuals rather than abstract groups) were only approached once another form of ‘civilian’ authority was invoked—in housing projects or refugee homes often on-site staff or building managers were approached first and often involved directly in the encounter, in other cases the Ordnungsamt or other local government agencies were involved

before the police approached someone at home. These efforts could be read as an attempt to allow the police to maintain an institutional face while appealing to a representative of 'community values,' e.g. a local manager or warden of public space, in line with police expectation and avoid having to enter into the type of negotiation that might potentially escalate into deeper conflict or hostility. The police, while seeking to classify and essentially 'solve' a situation need a way to define the role of the individual both within the situation and against a background: this process runs more smoothly if the police can maintain a plausible image of unity, and the more complex a negotiation over defining the situation becomes the weaker this illusion becomes. (cf. Harcourt 2001)

Garfinkel (1967) describes the "et cetera clause" (73) as a tendency of individuals to give meanings to events which complement their own actions and meaning-giving communicative acts within the interaction: someone who is identified as 'out of place' or treated as undesirable might find that any action they take or word they say becomes interpreted as simply confirming this account, regardless of perceived legitimacy—after all, someone who truly belongs in a place should not have to justify it, etc. The police can thus conclude many encounters by hewing closely to the institutional role and assuming that the other participant(s) is/are either aware, or should be made aware by the presence and involvement of 'representatives of the mainstream,' that they should correct their behavior in a way that satisfies the police (and presumably those members of the community who brought the problem to police attention.) This can often overlap with the involvement of community or organizational partners in policing, both through the active involvement of groups and community members who can more generally represent 'the mainstream' than a uniformed officer and through the symbolic association established by this cooperation which essentially holds various segments of up as models. In this way, police can theoretically maintain institutional facing and posturing but adapt more overtly discretionary practices and elements of situational authority through the selective involvement of representatives/representations of the community: in essence, still a focus on determining insiders vs. outsiders, but one which attempts to construct a larger community outside of a policing life-world. The difference in strategies and how they relate to individual and encounter-based practices are primarily a question of policing orientation towards the community as a concrete actor and as an abstract concept.

The most obvious differences have been well identified in the literature, primarily following Wilson (1968) who defined different policing orientations determined by the relationship of the policing organization to the local community; essentially, police can perform *policing for the community*, in which they act

to protect the general existing order from either *outside threats* or from change or *tendencies* within the community, or they can *police the community,* in which the local area itself is seen as inherently problematic. In practice, these two orientations can be similarly constructed. (cf. Waldeck 1999, Harcourt 2001, Sampson and Raudenbush 2004) Police can identify specific groups, typically youth, immigrants, or young men, as 'high risk,' and work to establish patterns in which the behavior viewed as problematic is either reduced or hidden from public sight. (Meehan 1992) This can include cases in which the police downplay or spend less time and effort investigating crime against these groups, either claiming that they 'brought it on themselves' or that the group itself is too uncooperative and is hindering any investigation. (Waegel 1981) Anecdotal evidence from ethnographic work, however, often portrays the police as being more sympathetic to these 'problem groups' than to the generally older, more private, individuals who tend to make complaints based around public behavior and social activity. (cf. Reuss-Ianni 1983, Hunold et al. 2016)

A key factor in defining territories and space is management and control. (cf. Gieryn 2000) Private residences and a number of locations frequently visited by the police—workplaces, restaurants and cafes, government agencies—have clearly delineated ownership. These local managers generally are the arbitrators of what are "normal appearances," when "misconduct is occurring" and if there is "cause for alarm" (Goffman 1971: 240) at least in terms of connecting these determinations to the specific setting spatially and socially. When police arrive at these locations it is typical for the authority source that is guiding the developing encounter to be immediately manifested—police approaching private residences were almost always clearly maintaining a 'business' (i.e. institutional) posture and professionalism—which would often be relaxed during the course of the encounter—or else, particularly in cases where the individual(s) were well known to the officers, make it clear that the visit was more of a 'social call' right from the outside, which would occasionally be reflected in more 'unguarded' behaviors such as the officers being invited in and taking a seat; in institutional settings especially this often was reflected in an almost ceremonial round of coffee. The overall message being conveyed is that police can only approach or enter private residences either when fully conforming to the limits and demands of the bureaucratic policing role, or when primarily taking up the role of community member and only secondarily that of the abstracted policing role (cf. Banton 1964, Young 2003) There are private domains and spaces which police can only enter by locking themselves into an interpretable authority-defining role—though once they are there, things may change.

Managed spaces are temporally variable: that is, while the police might approach a private residence in a certain case-dependent way at 3 pm, an entirely different set of considerations would be in play at 3am (at a minimum removing the plausibility of a random 'social call.') Public areas that are managed in other ways undergo similar and significant shifts; storefronts where owners maintain some form of legitimate authority in managing social space will take on a different meaning once the owner has closed up for the night, and anyone hanging around once stores has closed may be seen as suspicious if their presence can't be accounted for. Fassin (2013), for example, states that "at night, any individual walking or driving is potentially suspect, particularly in certain neighborhoods," (72) emphasizing that in some jurisdictions simply existing in a place beyond a certain time is enough to warrant further intervention by the police. Suttles (1968) refers to "impersonal domains": "nonresidential areas where the safety of a passerby is mostly in the hands of impersonal authorities who are either acting on behalf of someone else's interests or whose major responsibilities do not include the entire day." (36) These areas can be subject to "periodic anomie" as the types of expected and routine public behavior change and overlap throughout the day. The provided examples include a hospital and a main street housing several businesses but with little activity after dark. This term could easily be applied to the more urban areas of Falkenmark: while the streets of the inner-city area and pedestrian zones were rarely empty during the day, there was a marked drop-off after dark as stores even many restaurants closed relatively early. While there were some nightlife spots, many officers stated that the city was generally "dead" at night, attributing this to the higher average age and the relative lack of younger people without families. This meant that the city at night was both essentially unmanaged and lacking in the "normal, casual enforcement" (Jacobs 1961: 32) created by the presence of passers-by. Police (Revierpolizei officers, at least, who almost never worked late at night) did not seem to consider the streets at all dangerous at night, but it was clear from a handful of interactions that the presence of individuals on the street alone might be seen as questionable activity warranting further investigation if no obvious explanation could be discerned.[27]

[27] During field stays I generally arrived in in the largest city in Falkenmark later at night (usually after 9 or 10 pm) and one observation warranted recording in field notes on at least two separate occasions: while walking from the train station to my hotel, either the only or the vast majority of cars I saw were police cruisers. After learning more about the local organization of policing it retroactively became clear that this was more likely just one police car, possibly attempting to keep an eye on me specifically and making sure that I was in fact walking to a legitimate destination. On another occasion, I met with the police chief and other officials in a restaurant, and ended up staying after the others had left and talking with the

Due to both the lack of local managers to whom police could defer and the lack of effective resistance to the formal (or semi-formal) ordering of public space, the police, essentially by default, were the effective managers of most public spaces after dark or later at night: in contrast, the more rural areas were, unsurprisingly, much less frequently patrolled or watched at night, though patrol units purportedly paid extra attention to unmanaged sites that could be considered at risk of theft or vandalism, such as construction sites.

The use of social spaces in this way showed the invocation of two sources of knowledge—that related to police expertise (including 'common sense' understandings), and that related to specific readings of local norms. Police may not need to indicate 'community values' to justify their suspicion of individuals walking the streets after midnight, but their consideration of suitable explanations is also dependent on a knowledge of local factors, such as which destinations the individual might be headed towards. Other individuals who might have plausibly been considered suspicious, out-of-place, or even 'eccentric' or 'colorful' were often known individually to officers and were considered acceptable in spaces and at times where their presence and behavior might otherwise merit direct intervention and questioning.[28]

4.11 Dramas of Authority and Control

The police—specifically the Revierpolizei in Falkenmark—are given a set of tools (symbols, powers, literal tools) and a set of expectations and demands by nature of their office, and simultaneously have adapted, inherited, or crafted a more *ad hoc* set of tools (rhetoric, social capital, relationships) through their ability to manage their role and authority within situated interactions. These situational forms of managing interactions, however, bring with them their own expectations and demands and risk varying forms of role conflict, including the disparity

chief until after the restaurant would have presumably closed. We left and walked for a bit in the same direction; a police car pulled up towards us, and the officer in the passenger seat shined a light at us. Recognizing the chief, the officer muttered "sorry" and the car left without another word spoken. Both cases seemed to confirm that the presence of pedestrians on the street late at night was considered 'worth keeping an eye on' by patrol officers.

[28] While this point might seem obvious—that police interpret their observations based on specific knowledge they have gained from previous interactions with the same individuals or group—it should be considered how infrequently this is considered in attempting to theorize policing encounters or develop causal links between police/citizen actions and specific outcomes. (Reiss 1971, Sampson and Raudenbush 1999)

between police institutional concerns for criminal enforcement and reducing the perception of irresolvable yet legitimate issues and community values which problematize specific behaviors or patterns of behavior, trends (including cultural expressions), people and places with a larger focus on situation and setting. The police cannot easily extricate themselves from the classic bureaucracy dilemma of needing to make one decision within a specific context and frame but also needing that decision to be defensible and representative when viewed in the context of all decisions. The police, in cultural terms as well as institutionally, have tended to emphasize both the exigencies of situations—i.e. incidents simply require the application of the correct categorization and adequate and effective measures can be taken—and the broader institutional perspective which views crime as the major police focus and emphasizes the crime-fighter image and the production of crime statistics to both demonstrate the existence of definable problems and the effectiveness of certain styles of policing. (cf. Bittner 1970, Sparrow 2016)

Individual officers cannot, in every situation, maintain a purely institutional role, and the present context essentially undermines this source of authority in a great number of cases: police officers may not be entirely prevented from acting in a purely institutional or bureaucratic fashion, but the simple fact that the same actors often take on different roles in policing encounters, and that the individual can in many cases be separated from the role or placed into several roles at once, gives officers an incentive to manipulate, downplay, or subvert the ideal type role. The new demands taken up by police—many of which are, in the words of Officer Meyer, "to let people express their frustration"—are often both symbolic and also most conducive to a non-institutional source of authority. A local resident meeting with his local community officer to report graffiti or vandalism may not be as concerned with 'the state' taking his problem seriously as he is with the individual officer, whom he knows and trusts, speaking to him on his own terms. This was visible in the fieldwork, as a great number of encounters never resulted in formal follow-up measures or investigation, though it was exceedingly rare for the officer to entirely discount concerns shared by residents as not being police-relevant. The realm of issues relevant to Revierpolizei offers arguably exceeds that of 'normal' patrol policing by a great deal, with local knowledge and the need to know 'what's going on' serving as major factors here, but the dramaturgical presentation of these issues is even more significant: officers must show that the consideration of phenomena outside of 'core policing issues' is part of their job while also demonstrating that their interpretation of seriousness is not fully dependent on an institutional perspective; the officer cares about the problem because the community cares. In a way, this was consistent with the narratives

presented by many officers, where the greatest challenges to policing and to the local community were not in term of crime or even immediate risk, but rather longer term structural problems—particularly demographic change and the lack of economic development or opportunity—and for many officers in particularly political involvement in the police and constant reform programs were seen as threatening an acceptable though precarious status quo.

The practices used to handle situations demonstrated—consistently with much of the literature on police interactional practices and specifically that on rural and small-town policing (Bittner 1970, Manning 1977, Sykes and Brent 1980, Ericson 1982, Meehan 1992, Young 1993, Herbert 1996, Peterson 2008, Hunold 2011, Fassin 2013, Buvik 2018, cf. David et al. 2017)—that encounters were often broadly defined in ways that allowed them to be more effectively handled rather than routinely relying on the powers specifically allocated to police in order to 'take control.' The proposition that the core of policing is the capacity to use force (cf. Bittner 1970, 1974) is not intended to mean that individual situations are universally or even regularly guided by this force, but rather to imply a form of symbolic authority given to the police, essentially mirroring a key sociological aspect of violence: that its significant social power lies primarily in its potentiality and shared assumptions of what is possible. Police do not always need to shoot dangerous suspects but can often persuade them to stop by aiming their weapon and issuing an order (backed with a threat); police do not need to always draw their weapon if it is understood that they *could* draw their weapon, and so on. Yet far before situations reach the contingent point at which force may be applied or the threat of force may resolve the situation in the desired manner, there are countless points at which the police communicative, subtly or overtly, casually or theatrically, that the current encounter is a serious or everyday situation, that an encounter is even occurring. The invocation of force and various 'police-specific' practices (arrest, issuing fines, even unofficial warnings or 'civil inattention') exhibit how even the specific construction of the police within the community can affect social practices in public and the societal[29] execution of formal social control

The interactional model of dramatized police authority presented here is proposed as a general model of analysis for police interactions, but is considered most applicable to the case at hand and the manner and setting of policing in

[29] This study focuses primarily on police but it should be mentioned that current trends in policing research and criminology have challenged the very concept of 'police' to refer simultaneously to a practice and organization as the role of private forms of security and control has rapidly expanded. (Spitzer and Scull 1977, Manning 2005, Zedner 2006, Diphoorn 2015)

which less-categorizable personal relationships play a role and appeals to "crime fighting" and "law enforcement" to reinforce the functional authority of the police organization are less likely to be rhetorically effective or unironically reproduced or represented in the media. It is specifically the conditions that define policing in Falkenmark which increase the visibility (and almost certainly the prevalence) of 'alternative' policing roles to the dominant, ideal, and inevitably unsustainable institutional image. Among other embedded practices, this tendency to distance situational policing from this bureaucratic stock role includes a distancing from a downplaying of the role of physical force in policing: this poses a challenge to the presumption of the "monopoly on force" which is reflected not only in everyday practices but also in the narratives and 'backstage' presentations of self among the Revierpolizei in Falkenmark. Lucia Zedner (2006) writes that, "whether the modern state's claim to a monopoly of violence was, in practice, realized through the engine of the police or was rather a highly effective, though illusory, ideological construction is open to question." (78) The nature of community policing in Brandenburg demonstrates both general principles of how policing can work as well as challenges to normative concepts, particularly in the visibility of alternative constructions of power and order.

5 Violence and the Police

The tasks and types of work performed by the police are legion; theoretical approaches to explaining police behavior have often either stumbled in the attempt to include such diverse and seemingly unrelated acts or fallen into the trap of viewing policing as simply the gateway to the criminal justice system and only focusing on the law enforcement tasks prescribed by judicial or administrative institutions. (cf. Rumbaut and Bittner 1979, Bayley 1979, Bayley and Bittner 1984, Walker 1992, Manning 2005) One consistent common thread running through conceptualizations of police work is the inclusion of violence and risk. (cf. Crank 1994, Ericson and Haggerty 1997, Behr 2000, Christe-Zeyse 2006)

Klukkert et al. (2009) describe the legal basis for force in Germany:

> The legal requirements for using physical coercion are that (a) a measure by the police cannot be implemented effectively in any other way, (b) the principle of proportionality is not neglected when implementing immediate coercion, (c) immediate coercion will have the desired impact and (d) among the different coercive means the least harmful one (capable of bringing about the effect) is to be used. Regarding firearms, there are three ways police officers may use them (each one has different regulations in police law): (a) to protect others, (b) to protect themselves (self-defence) and (c) to kill an offender (e.g. in hostage-taking situations). (189)

These requirements set minimum conditions for implementing physical coercion without establishing when violence *must* be used. Violent interactions between police and citizens in Germany are rare, at least in comparison to the US. (Klukkert et al. 2009) Violence reminds, however, strongly associated with police at various levels including popular culture and in the importance of scandals and critical media events for establishing or challenging images of policing. (Wrocklage 2008, Ohlemacher 2011, Sturm 2011) Yet these associations are, without

A. Bielejewski, *Holding down the Fort*,
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further explanation or exploration, broad and specifically based in broader cultural narratives: is what makes police 'police' the fact that they employ violence, or is police violence a necessary component of dealing with situations where violence is likely to be encountered? More importantly to the present study, how do various understandings of violence impact the structure, character, and the interactional processes that constitute police work?

Violence is culturally seen as identical to police work in many cases. Ethnographic and interview-based research has found that police identify law enforcement orientations strongly with violence or coercive force. (Regoli and Poole 1980, Marks 2004, Kurtz and Upton 2017) Sandhu and Haggerty (2017) write:

> Officers frequently noted the difficulties have in making sense of images of violent encounters, which are messy and chaotic as compared to the stylized violence citizens are accustomed to from television and the movies. (91)

They state that officers often 'narrate' ongoing encounters in a way that outwardly seems unnecessary or excessive, essentially *curating* situations both for participants and onlookers in an attempt to make their definition of the situation both clear and more difficult to effectively resist. This reinforces the problematic nature of not just violence by the police, but of the larger problems inherent in police communication: police attempt to apply their understanding of a situation in a way which imparts 'order' and ends any resistance. (Ericson 1982) The police authority to do so is backed up by the capacity to use force, though it is relatively rarely necessary to exercise that force. (Bittner 1970) The actual implementation of force can undermine not just public trust in the police, but specifically any form of police authority not specifically predicated on the ability to use force (i.e. personal or situational-derived authority developed through repeated interactions and negotiation.) The police need to be able to manage the presentation of *potential* force dramaturgically in order to effectively communicate their intended meaning to any audience, and develop a repertoire of practices which can be applied. Fassin (2013) describes the internal and external managing of violent imagery of a French 'anti-crime squad'; officers identified with pop cultural images of 'maverick' or 'rogue' police—particularly idolizing, for example, the 'morally grey' officers of *The Shield.* (cf. Bielejewksi 2016) The reputation and appearance of these officers was deeply associated with violence in a way that often undercut the actual need for violence: "They were much readier than their colleagues to use force, but in general their presence was sufficiently menacing and their reputation well enough established to dampen any

urge to react in their public, who were aware that things would inevitably escalate into a confrontation that would culminate in charges of insulting[1] and resisting the police." (Fassin 2013: 60)

Violence has been attributed to two core aspects of policing: the police role and demands for service (i.e. what police do); and police occupational culture (i.e. how police learn to view what they do.) While there is potentially significant overlap between these two aspects, particularly depending on the particular approach or assumptions, effective arguments have been presented by Waddington (1999) and others (cf. Reuss-Ianni 1983, Skolnick 1985, Martin 1999, van Hulst 2013, and see Wilson 2000 for a more pop-culture-oriented approach) suggesting that conflating these two aspects has often been a weakness in criminological studies of the police: that is, either confusing what police *say* informally to colleagues to what they *do* in carrying out their routine duties, or assuming a direct and linear connection between the two, that policing culture is simply a reflection of police work. The most effective, and among the most cited, work in policing has generally maintained a separation between violence as related to the tasks police are expected to perform—essentially policing at a societal or institutional level—and the individual, group, or organizational level working practices that develop around these demands and expectations.

Of particular interest to the present work is what role violence plays *contextually* within both of these aspects. The area and organization being investigated differ significantly from the ideal type police agencies which were used to develop contemporary bases of knowledge about police work both in the US / UK and in Germany as well. (Young 1993, Weisheit et al. 1994, Feest and Blankenburg 1972, Barrett et al. 2009 cf. Girtler 1980) The region has fewer calls for service than would be typical for Germany due to the lack of major urban centers and likely to demographic factors (e.g. an older population and a high proportion of individuals who were born or raised in the area with local family.) Two generalized assumptions ('weak theories') were posited which would relate to a general

[1] It should be noted that in Germany, as in France as described by Fassin, it is illegal to insult a police officer: although this law (§ 185 StGB) does not only apply to police, it is primarily enforced in cases involving police, and many residents of Germany, including many police officers, in my experience, seem to believe that it only applies to police. What exactly constitutes a forbidden insult is not always clear: the term "Bulle" (with a meaning that could be contextually interpreted as either "cop" or "pig") has been historically considered legally insulting, but due to its common use in popular culture and by police themselves is never, if ever, enforced as such. The slogan "all cops are bastards" has been found to be inappropriately insulting only when directed at a specific individual officer. Approximately 3% of registered crimes in Brandenburg in 2013 were "insult" / "Beleidigung." (Land Brandenburg 2014)

thesis that violence would be constructed differently and play a different role both in practice and in policing (narrative) culture than would be otherwise expected based on the contemporary policing literature:

1) Fewer calls for service related to serious crime equate to a reduced focus on *crimefighting* as the most-valued policing task or orientation, and
2) working in a local community where personal networks play a significant role even within policing actions puts both the background and consequences of violence into 'sharper' focus which is reflected in how police construct violence.

These hypotheses were related to the rural characteristic of Falkenmark in particular but specifically to the Revierpolizei, as a community-oriented organization with a mandate that emphasizes the local and contextual aspects of situations. The first assumption could be further divided to relate directly both to the rural nature of the county but also to the structure of the work of the Revierpolizei, which is more proactive than reactive, and though calls for service and emergency response play a major role, they do not necessarily form the core duties as they typically do with patrol officers. (Reiss 1971, Mastrofski 1980, Mensching 2007, Demaree 2017) The image typically presented in the literature—at its most extreme in the US, but to some degree in the UK and Germany as well—is one in which police culture emphasizes violence not as a positive feature *per se* but as a necessary and useful tool for serving justice unrelated to judicial punishment, and that despite some 'softening' in the past several decades, this emphasis on conceptual violence remains central to the self-image of Western police, generally.[2] (Van Maanen 1978b, Paoline 2001, 2003, Campbell 2004, Chan 2004, Dick 2005, Behr 1993, 2006, Christe-Zeyse 2006, Moskos 2008b, Loftus 2009, Kurtz and Upton 2017) Barrett et al. (2009), using focus groups of officers presented with hypotheticals, found evidence that attitudes towards the 'proper' use of force varied between urban, suburban and rural departments: however, it should be considered that hypothetical scenarios lacking in personalized or local detail fit better to the idealized incident-based model of institutional policing as well as the practical realities of urban policing, but arguably have much less direct relevance to rural policing in particular. The fact that rural officer gave more 'by-the-book'

[2] Klockars (1980) refers to the "Dirty Harry" problem, in which it is possible that police officers may prioritize the ends over the means, i.e. when using even violence that they themselves deem as excessive and illegitimate is considered acceptable because it is seen as the most certain way to effect the desired outcome; this is without necessarily assuming that the use of violence could be considered an ends on its own. (cf. Parnaby and Leyden 2011)

responses while urban officers gave ‘no nonsense’ responses (e.g. seeing insults against officers as an invitation to a physical confrontation) may not necessarily indicate an increased aggressiveness among urban officers but rather the increased likelihood of rural officers to immediately link a hypothetical situation—one that would be highly unrealistic or at least rare in their everyday work routine—to an institutionally proper course of action (as abstract concepts and actors exist there, rather than in towns and villages where individuals can be properly identified and better understood.) Urban officers may better translate these hypothetical—where names, descriptions, appearances, locations, times of day, etc. play a less crucial role in situating an encounter when compared to role-defining behavior such as insulting or ignoring an officer. (cf. Van Maanen 1978a) In any event, the implication is that the application of the concept of violence to the realities, as well as identity, of police work varies based on the structural background of the community and region. What is being challenged here is the universality of this image of policing practice and culture: effectively asking the question of whether the Revierpolizei in Brandenburg present a counter-example by constructing and internalizing the relationship between violence and policing in a way that does not wholly correspond with the generalized narratives presented in the research literature.

In hermeneutic fashion, the present analysis seeks to present a plausible understanding of the complex and varied roles that violence can play within the realm of police work and culture within a specific geographic and institutional context. It should be noted that exploring violence in this way was not originally central to this study, but rather emerged ‘organically’ in conversation with police, in the presentation of stories and narratives, and, in the fewest cases, within observed interactions. (cf. Becker 1998, Konecki 2008) Coupled with the centrality of violence as a concept to the theory of policing as it stands today, it seemed worthwhile to examine the processes of meaning-making involving violence to the degree that it was possible.

Actual encounters between Revierpolizei officers and members of the community involving violence are rare enough that analyzing violence purely through participant-observation would be impractical, apart from raising a host of additional issues. (cf. Westmarland 2001) Violence was encountered as part of the field study primarily through narrative, in stories told both of officers’ previous experiences as well as well as previously heard stories; these stories were for the most part collected ‘organically’ from spontaneous retellings, rather than being prompted in interviews, by questions about violence specifically, etc. Analyzing the ways violence was used within stories uncovered a variety of uses and a scarcity of cases where violence was idealized or idolized. Violence could be

presented in ways that communicated information about the user, the recipient, or both, and could refer both to past experiences or situations as well as expectations for the future, such as how describing an individual as 'violent' could refer either to a history of committing, possibly unprovoked, violent attacks or to the assumption that the individual's current behavior (in the narrative being presented) indicates a likelihood of a situation escalating or of immediate violence. This analysis, presented later in the chapter, suggested that the narratives which Revierpolizei officers were most forthcoming with tended to downplay violence as something to be actively used, but differed in how they gave agency to violent actors or simply presented violence almost as a natural reaction, which could either be an essentially just conclusion to deviant or dangerous actions, or as an ever present risk to the officers themselves.

5.1 Violent Acts and Violent Symbols: Constructivist Concerns

"The bomb lives only as it is falling."

– Iain M. Banks, *Use of Weapons* (1990)

Despite its significant role in criminology and sociologies of crime, deviance, and social control, violence remains to a large extent poorly described, poorly defined and poorly understood.[3] A great deal of the literature conflates violence, as an act, with aggression, as a deterministic psychological characteristic. (Jenkins 1994, von Trotha 1997, Walby 2012) Even sociological approaches to violence, particularly from the perspective of conflict theories, tend to emphasize political science or political economy understandings of violence at a macro-level, and say little about interpersonal violence (Goode 1972 provides one exception.) Many critical and constructivist perspectives have "little to say about realities in which things are typically not 'bargained' and 'defined' but rather struck and killed, in

[3] The German-language sociological literature has in the past few decades developed a much more interaction-oriented approach to violence with a stronger emphasis on concepts such as labeling, legitimization, and sociology of the body, with to-date little overlap between American/British and German sociology. (cf. Peters 1995, Popitz 1996, Sofsky 1996, Nedelmann 1997, von Trotha 1997, Hitzler 1999, Bonacker 2002) Elias (1988) often discusses violence as a social problem, though his approach is closer to the systemic-political approach that can also be found in philosophical, political science, and historical approaches, similar to the war-focused connections between violence, nationalism and capitalism suggested by Giddens. (1985)

which power is not 'definitional' but rather 'power of action.'" (von Trotha 1997: 13–14, *own translation,* cf. Popitz 1992)

As sociological theory focused less on explaining violence, an increasingly pragmatic and practitioner-oriented criminology claimed violence as one of its key topics of study, but with an emphasis primarily on violence as a synonymous either with crime or with mental health issues (cf. Reiss and Roth 1993), while state violence become a topic left primarily to political science, international relations, and philosophy, with a greater focus on war than on policing (Jabri 1996, Smith 2005), or else considering police organizations essentially as part of a centralized administrate (capitalist) state. (cf. Seigel 2019) Legal definitions of violence, as well, may play an important role in discussions relating to police reform or formalized structures, but for an interpretive sociological approach, the relevance lies in how meaning is constructed by participants and observers. (Hochstetler et al. 2014, Sandberg et al. 2015, Presser 2016, see also Fish 1988, Soeffner 2003)

The difficulty in approaching violence from an interpretive (or constructivist) approach is that categories need to be established for defining what is and what is not to be discussed as violence. The compartmentalization of violence into various specific fields has led to continuing usage of the term *violence* as a metaphor to represent the *systems* that either implement violence or to imply that those systems themselves are, essentially, violence. (Garland 2001) Various categories of violence—institutional, interpersonal, symbolic or potential, abuse in various forms—are reduced to the same concept at the macro level. (cf. Zizek 2008) Additionally, newer trends in discussing institutional violence in particular have at times de-emphasized the physicality and subjectivity of violence, implementing the label of violence in a normative way to describe socially harmful acts but risking overlooking interactional considerations and potentially reducing violence to 'any undesirable uses of power.' (Walby 2010) Even if these applications of the term or concept were accepted, it would still be necessary to examine how, when, where and by whom these terms are successfully applied and the effects this labeling can have within interactions and within a broader societal context. If violence were to be universally maligned or treated as a consistently negative, undesirable form of action, the use of violence *to counter other uses of violence* would be, if not impossible, arguably much more difficult to justify or account for than it seems to be. Akerstrom (2002) presents a case where physical abuse, including the slapping of nursing home residents and residents hitting nursing staff with canes, is not regularly seen as 'violence' because, in the view of one nurse, "it's not directed at you, personally." (516) The fact that police—as well as others—are able to, even sometimes, effectively engage in violent acts without

needing to justify or neutralize the term at every level of social interaction (cf. Maruna and Copes 2005) makes it clear that violence is not 'equal,' that not all violence is given meaning in the same way, and that the act cannot be meaningful constructed simply through the physicality of it, but that the deeper context framing the actors and background need to be considered as inseparable from the act itself.

The symbolic relations of violence are significant, arguably more significant—from the perspective of social theory—than the implementation of violence itself. (cf. Soeffner 1991, Bourdieu 1991, Collins 2008) If an understanding is shared that violence *may* occur, a power difference between the potential user of violence and the potential victim is exploited without any violent act occurring, but overlooking this symbolically (if not explicitly) communicated potential would make it impossible to fully understand the interaction. At the same time, within human social actions the use of threats is assumedly intended to coerce or gain compliance, where actually employing violence would spoil the situation for both parties (e.g. in a bank robber's threat to shoot the bank manager, whereas actually doing so would in no way help him open the bank vault.) This relates to the "double-layered nature" of action, or an "action/commentary structure" (Katz 2002: 262) in which actions suggest culturally understandable patterns of action in which the entire sequence or ritual may not need to be fully acted out. Katz (2002) writes that:

> Implicitly known by everyone, the double-layered nature of action itself becomes a theme for signification. Thus, action may be underwritten without ever being performed. People commonly succeed in being taken seriously as really trying to perform a range of actions that they never actually complete, from effectively threatening violence to professing charitable concerns without ever writing the check… It is powerful testimony to the bootstrapped nature of social life that societies of all types and magnitudes are reproduced in recognizable form day after day, even while their social forms are only partially inhabited by proper spirits, even while so many people are seen as doing little to flesh out social forms beyond gesturing their will to invoke them. (262)

The symbolism of violence is both subjective and intersubjective: certain actions, behaviors, characteristics, or objects may be associated with violence by certain individuals or in specific contexts, but very often communicative processes and interaction rituals accompany these to highlight or downplay the potential for violence. (Hitzler 1999, Collins 2005) While a subjective approach is based on experiences of (potential) violence, an intersubjective approach considers the interactional processes between actors and the context in which violence may be experienced, and particularly the range of practices used to communicate

violent intent, threats, peaceful intent, or legitimize the use of violence. (Nedelmann 1997, von Trotha 1997) Violence as both a symbol and as a practice has been increasingly anonymized, presented as a social fact lacking an interactional context. (Soeffner 200) For this reason it is seen as critical in exploring the 'lowest' levels of violence, not just as acts but particularly in how the symbolism of violence plays a role in everyday interactions and is given—or interpreted to have—deeper meaning: this means moving beyond a binary of what factors cause or avoid violence and rather looking at how violence is embedded within both interactions and within narratives and definitions which demonstrate various forms of authority over establishing certain behavior, actions and reactions as normal and in maintaining a moral order. Exploring the relationship between violence and the police within the context of the police requires an in-depth focus on the use of these interactional practices to communicate violence, exploring the intersubjective where the subjective is essentially unknowable: practices can become routine or ritualistic for separating symbolic, potential violence from immediate or manifest violence.

Force is considered here primarily as physical force of one individual against another. Though it could be argued that the terms have different weight or describe different actions or aspects, the terms 'violence' and 'force' are used here interchangeably, though the term 'use of force' applies only to that coercive force exercised by the police whereas violence may, where specified, refer to more general cultural concepts.

5.2 How Violence Defines Policing

> "Let us accept the facts staring us in the face—that demonstrably we are no longer a republic. We are no longer governed by laws, only by armed men and force. This is just like the days of Billy the Kid. You have an armed man going down a dusty street and that is authority."
>
> – Gore Vidal, *America the Great… Police State* (Aug. 2009)

The relationship between the use of force and police work is one of the most discussed and written about topics within policing research, and yet there is very little consensus or shared framework for understanding how violence is used or understood by police or what is even meant by violence in a normative sense. Statements such as "We live in a world that increasingly displays distaste for the use of physical force to direct or control the behavior of others" (Alpert and Dunham 2004: 1) are commonly used to precede discussions of controlling,

channeling or regulating the use of force by police work, but do not necessarily precede a critical analysis of how force is conceived of or represented within society, or by the police. The role of the police is often presented within the context of the 'rule of law' in which coercive force is presented as a social ill to be minimized, and the police are seen as one of few legitimate exceptions due to the 'monopoly of force' (Bittner 1970, Behr 2000, cf. Manning 1980) which pushes the responsibility for violence onto those who *force* the police, rationally, to react with violence. (cf. Fish 1988) Maintaining arguments justifying—but not celebrating—violence by the state while condemning violence as a serious enough issue to warrant intervention by the state has been a precarious issue in the past century, but one which has rarely been taken seriously within formal policing institutions; the primary interest in exploring this topic has come in the examination of police work as social interaction, which will be discussed in the following section, and in policing occupational culture and self-image, which will be discussed in greater detail and in relation to the Revierpolizei in Brandenburg in the second section.

Violence can define both the aggressor and the victim beyond the context of a single encounter once labels are effectively applied. The use of violence has defined the police not just in their core activities but also through cultural narratives on police abuse of power and excessive force. A significant portion of the literature on police violence focuses specifically on this topic, generally emphasizing either individual, primarily psychological, factors to identify individual officers or small groups as violent, or cultural-structural, exploring the relationship to violence and subjective meanings of violence constructed by officers within the theoretical institution of policing. (Alpert and Dunham 2004) Police abuse of power has specifically been the target of several committee-led investigations in the US following high profile scandals, such as the Rodney King beating in 1991 which resulted in the Christopher Commission. The Christopher Commission in particular focused on police accountability and insinuated that law abiding, rule following officers would never commit or be at serious risk of being accused of using excessive force. Klockars (1996) is skeptical of this institutional approach, stating that "there is no definition of excessive force that automatically renders it a form of brutality and escalates it to the status of a scandal," (7) as the broader backdrop of use of force incidents was, in the end, more significant in determining how these incidents were framed or treated in the media, as aberrations or typical police excess, as warning signs of things to come or as unavoidable side-effects of crime control.

Policing is also defined by the use of force against police. (Van Maanen 1978b, 1980, Ohlemacher 2011) The mandate of policing charges officers with a variety

of generalized tasks; the use of force is not a task in itself, but rather a capacity of police work intended to aid the police in accomplishing their immediate tasks as well as to *overcome any resistance.* (van Maanen 1974) The ability of police to use deadly force in most jurisdictions, specifically in the US and Germany, is legally not far removed from defense of self or others. (Fyfe 1988) Brodeur (2003) states that the "police continuum of force *ends where the military one begins.*" (208) This all refers back to the idea that police, in carrying out their duties, may face not only resistance but possibly attack. Ohlemacher (2011) found that police in Germany faced a higher risk of attack with (presumed) deadly intent than non-police, but at the same time were statistically at less risk of actually being killed in attacks than private citizens were.[4]

This basic concept within policing—physical risks to officers—has had far reaching consequences both visible in the structure and organization of policing, i.e. the availability of not just handguns but increasingly more powerful forms of weaponry; the requirement that patrol officers in many jurisdictions, including Brandenburg (with the specific exception of the Revierpolizei) travel two to a squad car; but the impact often considered to have the most impact and at the same time to be the most opaque is the effect it has had on policing culture and the self-image of the police.

5.3 Doing Violence: Coercive Force as the Core Police Function

"I'm a psych major—words are my weapons."

"I'm a security guard—weapons are my weapons."

Community, S5 E8

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[4] Ohlemacher emphasizes that the deaths of police officers on duty play a significant role within the profession and society, but at the same time are far removed from the "American circumstances." (2011: 191) It should be considered here that German police are primarily organized at the state level and then through districts or counties, meaning that even when on average fewer than one officer is killed on duty per month, it will also not be uncommon within a few years for officers anywhere in German to be aware of officers operating within the same policing institution of them who were attacked and killed. The fact that a Bavarian, Baden-Württemberger, or Brandenburger police officer was killed may have more impact on an individual officer or local policing culture than simply framing the case of an attack against a German officer, and officers who may have previously worked or been in the academy with the slain officer may be more widely distributed geographically and in terms of units, function, and status in the hierarchy. (cf. Kreissl 2008)

A useful starting point—and a specific point which Manning (2013) discusses as often oversimplified and misunderstood—is Bittner's (1970) presentation of the use of force not just as the defining characteristic for determining what types of situations become police work, but as symbolically important for understanding how police work is imagined in society writ large.

Bittner's most lasting legacy may be his definition of the role of the police as "*a mechanism for the distribution of non-negotiably coercive force employed in accordance with the dictates of an intuitive grasp of situational exigencies*." (1970: 46) However, he is careful to mention that force itself, even implied force, rarely comes into play. His ethnographic work focuses only tangentially on violence *per se*, instead exploring how police officers frame and manage situations very often both to avoid the use of force but also to leverage the fact that force is one possible outcome in order to maintain their legitimacy and their situational authority. (cf. Bittner 1967, 1974) He details how force is 'methodologically normalized,' how police use "the aura of violence to sustain compliance." (Manning 2013: 56) The focus remains on *coercion,* and how police maintain control over situations through a variety of practices and tactics. Limiting the actual use of police may strengthen the legitimacy of the police, but this legitimacy still stems greatly from the potential of violence as a way to effectively and authoritatively resolve situations. (Brodeur 2007) Bittner explores—although more in passing than as an in-depth analysis—the ironic nature of society trying to establish an order without violence by instituting a body largely defined by its capacity to use violence, adding that we "cannot understand how the police 'found themselves' in this unenviable position without taking into consideration that one of the cultural trends of roughly the past century-and-a-half was the sustained aspiration to install peace as a stable condition of everyday life." (1970: 45) This position, in Bittner's view, requires police to adapt an ethos that essentially contradicts the basis of their legitimacy: that violence—at least when used properly—is not only an effective tool for problem-solving and conflict-resolution but also imparts a moral weight for justly punishing the unjust. Violence is thus able to become an essential element of a police self-image, as the use of violence becomes a means unto itself.[5] The rhetoric of the 'war on crime' that has escalated since

[5] In a 1999 interview with Jean-Paul Brodeur, Bittner maintained that although '95%… perhaps 99%' of policing did not involve violence, the "unique competence" of police to use violence both to accomplish their goals and as a goal in itself essentially defined the police role. Bittner compares the police to ordained priests: "The unique competence of the priest is to administer sacraments. But that's not what he does all the time. For most of his time he is consumed by pastoral duties or by prophetic duties, that is, speaking sermons [or] going out and doing social work. But if you want absolution… the only place you can get it is at the

the 1960 s reminds police that their *real* work is never routine, but that they—and we as a society—are in a constant state of emergency and must fight against crime with all the tools at their disposal because "we are in imminent danger of losing everything!" (1970: 48)

William Westley, one of the first researchers to examine policing sociologically, focused specifically not just on police violence but on how the concept of violence intersected with identity and guided encounters from beginning to end, impacting police work far beyond its actual implementation. Though his original publication focused specifically on the *illegal* use of violence by police, much of his analysis could be applied to the use of sanctioned, 'legitimate' violence as well. Westley presents a tripartite thesis that "(a) the police accept and morally justify their illegal use of violence; (b) such acceptance and justification arise through their occupational experience; and (c) its use is functionally related to the collective occupational, as well as the legal, ends of the police." (1953: 34, see also Westley 1970) Even Westley admits, despite officers' justification of violence in cases of disrespect or certain types of crimes, that extra-legal violence in his observed department did not appear to be frequent and unprovoked violence was unlikely to be common at all. There are hints here that violence is primarily relevant in how it frames police images of their own role and justifies their own categorization of individuals within situations: Westley, despite focusing predominantly on policing practices, was a pioneer in understanding the significance and normative role of the police occupational culture. (Greene 2010)

The functional role of symbolic violence is often described as fundamental to the hypothesized close-knit police occupational culture, based not so much on facing or engaging in actual violence, but more in the perceived risk of violence or the assumption that others view the police as violent. (Crank 1998, Cockcroft 2013) Loftus (2009b) writes that a "sense of togetherness is reinforced by defining features of the police role, including working the arduous hours of the shift system together: difficulties in separating work from home life; needing to rely on colleagues in times of danger; and the isolating nature of their position as the impersonal face of coercive authority." (14) Waddington (1999) notes that adapting an occupational culture centered around the symbolism of violence and conflict "not only places the police in the position of valiant protectors of society,

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confessional from… a person who is a priest. What I'm trying to suggest is that the sacramental duty of the priesthood is defining of it *even though* it's only a small part of it and most of the time is taken up by other things." (Brodeur 2007: 113) A relevant question here might be of what relevance it is that even 1 to 5% of police work theoretically involves violence, or if this 'unique competence' would still be considered to define the profession of policing were it never at all invoked in its full capacity.

but also of those who are knowledgeable of the dark side of society and, therefore, in a uniquely privileged position to apprehend the danger that threatens [it.]" (299)

5.4 The Symbolism of Violence

> "The force of the law is always and already indistinguishable from the forces it would oppose. Or to put the matter another way: there is always a gun at your head. Sometimes the gun is, in literal fact, a gun." (Fish 1988: 898)

While the implementation of force by police remains a controversial and pressing issue, it also seems to be one likely to remain controversial and pressing for some time. Policing culture, specifically within the US, seems to be embracing this 'warrior mentality' as a way to brush off criticisms of police violence, while critics of policing as it stands offer little in terms of substantial reform due to the opaqueness of the policing organization. (Sparrow 2016) The symbolism remains relevant, particularly in how minor everyday aspects define what police work is. Van Maanen discusses the significance of police symbolism in setting police work apart in the eyes of the police themselves:

> Various identifying devices carried by the police, such as the badge, the uniform, and the truncheon, promote and make visible [the contrast between policing and other occupations,] although it is the revolver carried on and off duty which serves as the omnipresent symbol of membership within the community. Dispatchers in the radio room wear guns, "Officer Friendly" visiting the local elementary school to lecture on bicycle safety wears a gun, administrators wear guns, the police psychologist and chaplain—if they are sworn officers—wear guns, even the Chief of Police often wears a gun. To not be armed, no matter where one is or where one is located in the organization, is a potential sign that the person no longer cares about the job, about his social position in the police community, or, perhaps, about his very own colleagues. (1980: 148)

The identification with policing through violence extends beyond this, particularly in terms of cultural presentations of policing. (Wilson 2000, Bielejewski 2016) Although violent encounters between police and individuals are certainly the least likely type of encounter, they are the ones most likely to gain traction in social or mass media and to affect narrative frames of how police are talked about, talked to, and used as metaphor.

The cultural significant of violence to policing is difficult to understate. Both Westley and Bittner present the emphasis on violence among police officers as a

reaction to the position police work has been placed in within society: needing to carry out ‘dirty work,’ using behaviors otherwise condemned as base or unfit for normal society to confront others employing not always dissimilar behaviors, (Dick 2005, cf. Hughes 1951, 1962) with Bittner (1970) noting that “no amount of public relations work can entirely abolish the sense that there is something of the dragon in the dragon-slayer.” (7) Waddington (1999) remarks that:

> Few of us would feel entitled to approach a fellow citizen in a public place and demand, however politely, an account of themselves; but this is something that police officers frequently do. Young officers intervening in a violent domestic quarrel may find themselves exercising authority over adults old enough to be their parents. Even when officers provide a service, like searching for a missing child, they violate the privacy of those whom they serve, for they will demand to know whether, for example, a family quarrel has prompted the disappearance. (299)

Careers and social roles involved in dirty work tend to look for ways to normalize or dignify their work, either by changing societal perceptions or by adopting subcultural perspectives which value otherwise low status or stigmatized actions. (Hughes 1951, 1962) While dirty work can encompass a variety of tasks that would otherwise violate general social norms or be seen as ‘low work,’ the use of violence is in certain forms and contexts valued in hegemonic masculine subcultures (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, Behr 2017), and emphasizing these aspects of the job—i.e. catching criminals, ‘fighting the bad guys’—is likely an ‘easier sell’ than types of policing tasks which don’t involve violence but which could otherwise be seen as low status work—e.g. dealing with addicts or sick people. (cf. Vollmer 1971) This functional aspect of police culture has been primarily described as (an attempt at) legitimizing the work of the police to an external audience and to secure respect, and arguably thereby compliance, preemptively, but it has also increasingly been analyzed as an internal mechanism less concerned with external experiences or ‘societal frontstage’ and more with maintaining an internal ethos, work satisfaction and self-image. (Martin 1999, Waddington 1999, Marks 2004, Mensching 2007, Manning 2012)

In the German context, Behr (2006) describes a shift from the Post-war self-image of the police in terms of protection of the state and the rule of law to a more citizen-centered orientation around the 1980 s. He associates an earlier fixation with the application of violence with a hegemonic masculinity which sees violence by presumably male police officers against primarily male offenders as an effective ‘smoothing out’ of disorder. Conflicts between citizens and police

governed by aggressive masculinity are increasingly rare, according to Behr[6], as transformation processes in the police have fundamentally altered the police self-image and downplayed violence and strength as core values; yet traces still remain—primarily within special units focused on the policing of specific groups. Most scholars, however, still identify a broad police occupational culture in Germany that is consistent with that described generally and in which masculinity and emphasis on violence play significant roles, though these cultures might be even more flexible due to the larger state-based institutions and career mobility when compared to US municipal policing. (Watolla and Hermanutz 2014, Dübbers 2015, Behr 2017, 2018)

In any event, the fact remains that the *proper* use of violence in situations in which violence is deemed necessary is generally considered within policing culture(s) to be a necessary and valued part of the police work—worth questioning is how this plays out culturally within the police and how universal this understanding of the use of force is. The generalized occupational culture of the police is already seen to be unrelated to the actual work police do or the specific individual experiences of violence officers may have[7], but the practices and narratives that reflect this culture may very well vary between contexts, i.e. between urban and rural settings, between reactive patrol and proactive community engagement assignments.

Violence as related to the police is not random, in the sense that structural and process-related factors surround it, as well as that its use occurs within interactions which develop both through situational determinants (i.e. what happens in the encounter) as well as through the use of culturally-interpretable symbols. Violence itself can be used as a symbol with normative or moral weight, particularly when considered within policing occupational cultures, or symbolized through the use of communicative practices, gestures, speech acts or the presentation of physical objects.

[6] It should be noted that Behr's more recent work seems to revise this position somewhat, with a stronger focus on aggressive masculinity as a problem in hierarchical organizations. (cf. Behr 2022)

[7] Waddington (1999) notes that "[t]here is little doubt that the occupational self-image of the police is that of 'crime-fighters' and this is not just a distortion of what they do, it is virtually a collective delusion. A mountain of research has indicated that police have little impact on crime rates, are responsible for discovering few crimes and detecting fewer offenders, do not spend much duty-time on crime-related tasks and so forth." (299)

5.4.1 Violence as a Symbol

The relationship of violence to the concept of ‘dirty work’ lies primarily in the physicality of the act, in the violation of general social norms by touching someone without their consent or in a way that redefines the situation as something exigent. Behr (1996) describes the difference between *head work* and *hand work* (Kopfarbeit / Handarbeit) and applies this to policing: while head work is generally seen as legitimate middle-class work based on concepts of rationality and (constrained) decision-making, hand work is seen as not just menial, but, by emphasizing the physicality of touching *others*, it is considered tainted and segregates its practitioners into restricted classes. (cf. Bittner 1970) Some forms of *hand work*, specifically that of doctors and increasingly nurses, avoid stigmatization by emphasizing the professional status and expert knowledge behind the use of physicality, as well as by restricting it as often as possible to secluded clinical settings and away from public audiences. Police officers are able to claim professional status and expert knowledge effectively, but the public nature of their work arguably leaves aspects of police work in a meso-state between high and low forms of work. Notably, the aspects of police work that emphasize *head work* have traditionally been downplayed at the institutional level, as seen in the status of police discretion and decision-making power and the emphasis on presenting technocratic efficiency rather than politically-responsive strategy-making. (Feest and Blankenburg 1972, Bittner 1974, Blumberg 1979, Goldsmith 1990, Dick 2005, Buvik 2016) The police, as an institution, tend to focus on what the police do—in the use of official statistics, press releases, etc.—while avoiding broader discussions about what the police *should* be doing or how, when or why certain decisions are made.

While the use of violence by police may be ‘normal,’ in the sense that it corresponds to a legitimate, expected police role, the specific and immanent use of violence against an individual is not normal, and is essentially stigmatizing behavior. When police confront an individual and employ coercive force, the violation of normal interaction constitutes a ritual that may even effectively become a degradation ceremony: the individual is not only restrained, but is in a way *visibly* losing power, status, and face. (Garfinkel 1956, Collins 2005, Bonacker 2002, cf. Goffman 1971) In contrast to doctors who primarily perform work on patients in private, clinical settings to minimize the potentially degrading, norm-violating actions required in even basic medical procedures, coercive force applied by police can occur just as often in a public setting as in a private one, with the designation formally playing no role in the decision whether force is

considered appropriate.[8] Yet the actual use of violence by police is guided by a variety of perceptual and interactional factors, many of which are coterminous with the managing of physical space—it is for this reason that a key signifier of an appeal to (or the maintenance of) institutional authority is maintaining essentially a 'combat readiness,' keeping distance and keeping clear physical space for the officer to draw a weapon or physically restrain others if necessary; these factors often coincide with the concepts of spatial space which also effect police readings of an ongoing situation. Officers who have entered a house have typically entered with a more relaxed, routine posture or else as emergency response, potentially with weapons drawn, and these existing frames certainly impact how the actions and reactions of residents and suspects are interpreted in the context of 'violent intent.' (cf. Collins 2008)

Violence by the police has often been associated with specific groups or demographics who have effectively been framed, either by society broadly or more specifically by government or police institutions, as problematic. Waddington (1999) writes: "Distinguishing criminals from citizens is part of a wider strategy that excludes certain groups from citizenship, for once this is achieved the exercise of coercive authority can be conducted almost without restraint." (300) Identifying groups and then, more immediately, individuals as criminal, deviant, or outsiders, is often a prerequisite condition to legitimizing the use of force even when that use of force is already legally justified, and the degradation which may result from the application of violence is not only threatening due to the obvious physical harm or to the immediate visible loss of power or agency, but also to the implication that the affected person belongs to a social category of those with no recourse.[9] (cf. Becker 1963)

[8] Little research has specifically explored the role of public or private settings, or the presence of an audience, in how police employ coercive force. (cf. Alpert and Dunham 2004) Only the recent trends in the use of body-worn cameras by police officers have reignited discussions about how and when force is employed with regard to who will be able to witness—and document—what happens. (Schneider 2018)

[9] Similar concepts have been relevant to US debates over the 'proper' solution to dealing with domestic violence. (cf. Sherman et al. 1992) Findings in the US have relatively consistently found that arrest is an effective deterrent to future domestic violence incidents in some cases, but in other cases leads directly to retaliatory violence. (Pate and Hamilton 1992) As a result, few US departments have strict policies for how police should act with regard to making an arrest. In contrast, German policing policy is expressed in a phrase familiar to every police officer, "wer schlägt, geht" (lit: who hits, goes) in which the offender—assumed in almost every provided example to be a man—is at a minimum physically removed from the premises. (Lamnek et al. 2012)

Alpert and Dunham (2004) present an interactional theory of police violence which they describe as "authority maintenance." Consistent with the earlier work of Westley (1970) among others, this approach focuses on the continuous domination of the encounter and the consistent ability to define the situation by police as the 'normal' course of a police encounter, with the implication that violence is employed not only to maintain physical control of a situation but also to force a *higher level* of submission than would otherwise be necessary. A similar practice is described by Van Maanen (1978), in which "'street justice'—a physical attack designed to rectify what police take as personal insult" (310) is used against individuals considered to be "assholes" based on their presumed challenging of police authority. Violence in these cases is seen as essentially a moral statement, inflicting pain[10] and degrading the status of the person *because* they have become a victim: in stark contrast to the socio-legal assumptions conflating violence with deviance. (cf. Cancino and Enriquez 2004, Dick 2005) In these cases, violence serves *as* punishment, rather than simply as a tool for enforcing compliance to aid in the efforts of a larger formalized system of punishment.

This is not to say that violence is routinely used by police for these reasons or as a purely moral statement; rather, the relevant argument is that the use of violence will often have these effects *regardless of why violence is employed*, hence the emphasis in the literature and in practice of attempting to minimize the actual use of force, consistent with the practices described by Bittner. The understandings of violence described have been explored ethnographically but primarily in the context of urban US or UK policing and in patrol divisions in which community contact almost exclusively occurs in response to calls for

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[10] The literature on violence often includes the element of pain, for example considering violence to be the creation of pain not just as a physical sensation but as creating a connection between inflictor and inflictee based on the situational aspects of the act, the experienced intentionality, and the reaction and aftermath. (Von Trotha 1997, Inhetveen 1997) Pain was considered within the fieldwork in Brandenburg at various levels, but played essentially no role in how violence was reconstructed through narrative accounts. The only mentions of words evoking the concept at all were a handful of separate statements, occasionally more light-hearted, along the lines of "we don't want to hurt anyone" when discussing ideas of policing goals: the German phrasing for "hurt" here literally means "make pain" (weh tun) but, just as in English, colloquially can refer to a more general concept of 'non-ideal circumstances' as well as physically experienced pain: both a swung baton and an expensive speeding ticket can hurt, not to mention harsh words or personal embarrassment. As actual physical violence was rare, encounters with victims of violent encounters were correspondingly rare and provided little information that could contribute meaningfully to this point. Pain certainly plays a significant role in conceptualizing violence and in how violence is experienced (particularly by victims), and its omission from this work is simply due to the lack of available evidence from the field.

service or reported crimes. Kelling and Coles (1996) in advocating for a *Broken Windows* style of policing present several examples of police employing coercive force in potentially escalating scenarios, i.e. white police officers in primarily black neighborhoods. They argue that when the officers are familiar with the local community *as individuals* and their use of force can be understood in a broader context as related to solving a problem, the audience or other involved parties will side with the police (or at least not actively side against the police), and the individual against whom force is applied will be unable to effectively frame the situation as racially based or as a conflict between police and community. The degrading aspects of the force are still implied to be present, but assumed to be only applicable to a person who is already at risk of losing status within their local community and with the immediate audience, and in this case the police are simply 'authenticating' a change in social status which was already occurring. Whether these scenarios could be considered realistic or relevant, the implication is that among police officers who have a closer familiarity with their community and it residents violence will necessarily be seen in a more complex context and not simply as justified based on the authority of the police: the use of violence needs to be weighed against the consequences to the individual not just physically but socially, and the positioning of the immediate community (particularly those present as participants or observers but presumably in a more general sense) with regard to the conflict between police and specific individuals needs to be considered. (cf. Christie 2004[11])

[11] Christie (2004: 4–5) presents two hypothetical scenarios for comparison, involving a man drinking in a park in front of children: in one case, as the neighbors were not "forced to cooperate" and get to know one another the man is treated from a 'police perspective' as a suspicious person and taken in, while in the second, he is recognized as a local man with mental health issues who is otherwise harmless. The primary contrast here between Kelling / Coles and Christie is Christie's implication that contacting the police already suggests a failure in attempting to solve the problem within the community and that the arrival of the police already applies stigma to the targeted, undesired individual, while Kelling and Coles, while advocating minimal coercive force, emphasize that the police can gain cooperation—more in terms of moral support than physical assistance—from the local community and then if violence becomes necessary it will not represent a threat to the community at large. In both cases, the intervention of the police is seen as essentially transformative, making a singular encounter into something that represents conflict between police and community or state and citizenry.

5.4.2 Symbols of Violence

> "I am fate with a badge and a gun."
>
> – Officer Brian Taylor, *End of Watch* (2012, dir: David Ayer)

An interactionist perspective on symbols emphasizes the construction of meaning; generally focusing more on the situational processes of negotiation and meaning-making rather than structure or stability between encounters. (Fine 1992, Musolf 1992, Snow 2001) The symbolism of police work is often functional, both in the sense that many symbols of policing—particularly in terms of weaponry and tools such as handcuffs and flashlights—have practical uses, and in the sense that these objects need to be symbolically linked to the police and reinforce the authority of the police; a police officer pointing a gun at a suspect intends that suspect to remain still not only because of the threat of death or injury, but also because the gun is being held by a police officer with an assumed legal right to do so, who may, if the situation develops in a particular way, decide to shoot and be considered justified both by immediate bystanders or additional responders as well as later on by the courts, the press, or society at large. What a gun *is* is of less importance within the interaction, and assumed to be already understood by all involved, than what the gun *means* in the moment, in terms of how, when, and against whom it will be used. Stokes and Hewitt (1976) write that:

> A great many of the objects that constitute the human world have a 'pre-existing' meaning, in the sense that people confront such objects with a set of assumptions about them – with a particular preparedness to act in routine, familiar and unquestioned ways. These meanings have to be verified, to be sure, as people act toward familiar objects in routine ways and either find or do not find that their lines of conduct can be completed. But so long as conduct can be constructed appropriately by taking familiar objects for granted, the objects persist and their meanings are relatively stable. (841)

Communicative forms representing violence, or the potential for violence, can come in many forms operating at different conceptual levels. (Gusfield 2000, Manning 2012 cf. Turner 1974) Relevant here is the distinction between immediate, or actionable, symbols and representations, or representation symbols. This distinction is not mutually exclusive, but rather is based on the different ways in which meanings can be constructed in relation to the object-as-sign. Immediate symbols are capable of being used or becoming physical implements of violence or authority—i.e. handguns or batons—and even their mere presence in a situation or any act drawing attention to them can signal that violence is possible,

likely or not. Immediate symbols signify that which they can do or that which they can be used for. They are typically icons of themselves—intentionally recognizable in their function, but also maintained as “possessional territory” (Goffman 1971: 38): as objects which almost always imply a sense of belonging to a person or setting or, in this case, tethering a person to a certain role and image. While weapons could be considered non-symbolic in their utilitarianism, they bear a deeper association with the police role, and the purpose of brandishing them is—at least in theory—to *not* have to use them. Considering the physical incarnations as symbolic suggests that “to see what is happening with a symbolic is to distinguish that experience as other than a more common meaning—usually one of means and ends; of reason rather than emotion; of universal terms rather than particular images.” (Gusfield 2000: 219) Immediate symbols essentially straddle the “distinction… between manifest meanings that are immediately apparent and latent meanings, not immediately apparent but perceptible.” (Gusfield 2000: 219) They bear meaning in the future tense; without intent or action nothing is likely to happen with them, but their presence already signifies that they *could* be implemented. Operational processes, that is, where meaning is inferred by how the symbol is used and by whom, are most relevant in establishing shared meaning and situations with these types of symbols. (Turner 1967) Raising a weapon signifies an intent to strike with it, even if the ‘true’ intent is simply to make a threat, but this threat can be interpreted by others because there is not only potential, but accompanying behavior that has moved in the direction of turning that potential into action. However, significantly, exegetical processes, where meaning is determined from individual understandings, experiences, or accounts—i.e. ‘reading from the text,’—is also relevant, particularly in cases where the symbol (e.g. a police firearm) is simply present but not actively being handled, used, or referred to: to an observer aware of its presence it certainly still bears symbolic meaning.

Representations operate on a more abstract level but may invoke other symbols, in the sense that a police uniform or badge indicates the office and corresponding authority and power of an officer—including the ability to use coercive force. Representations are often not intended to be symbols first and foremost, and while they may often accompany specific types of actions they are generally not used directly, and as a result effectively communicating their significance and meaning is key to image work. (Manning 1982) A police officer’s badge and uniform—trends in ‘tactical gear’ notwithstanding (Maguire and King 2004, Kraska 2007)—are essentially only effective to the extent that they are able to communicate with certainty that the bearer is a police officer and entitled to certain accompanying powers and authority, and it is for this reason that

uniforms and badges, as well as patrol cruisers, are made to be visible, contain unmistakable text, and tend to share common features, most famously a color scheme. These representations communicate meaning not so much by instructing or providing new contexts or relations, but rather by tapping into already existing sources of (assumed) cultural knowledge: a uniform alone cannot tell you much about a police officer or what he or she is capable of: it simply tells you that whatever you think a police officer to be is what you are currently seeing. Representations set a socio-cultural context—including boundaries, expectations, and relations—to the meanings being presented that is more encompassing, as well as nuanced, than the more direct cause-effect, action-oriented relationships implied by immediate symbols. The objects that identify an individual as a police officer are able to do so specifically because they are made visible in many arenas, often simplified or stripped down to the point at which minor differences (such as differing logos or types of firearms) become indistinguishable.

What is significant with both immediate symbols and representations is that they imply a common understanding of their meaning, loosely, and that the potential violence implied can be 'curated,' that is, meaningfully applied to interactions and taking on more or less relevance as actions are taken and reacted to: an armed police officer ordering a coffee will not be mistaken for a robber despite the presence of the weapon, but may be considered welcome for the general idea of safety that the presence of an officer brings; an officer with a drawn gun will always be seen differently as one with a holstered weapon.[12] Representations can 'channel' or contextualize what would otherwise be seen as primarily

[12] Katz (2002) uses a pop-culture example to emphasize how this symbolism always needs to be curated and put in a context which allows the interpreter to imagine the second action, that which is being threatened or hinted at:

> Just barely under the surface, people are always attending to the possibility that the production of taken-for-granted reality will fail. Thus when Woody Allen, in his movie *Take the Money and Run,* hands a bank teller a stickup note, he receives not cash but the calmly posed question, 'What is a "gub"?' His demeanor, which does not immediately warrant a presumptive definition of the situation as a robbery, highlights ambiguities in his handwriting. Badasses, in contrast, develop an expertise in manifesting the bona fides to execute many crimes they never launch.

Another example could be found in the sketch comedy show *Kids in the Hall*, in a sketch where masked bankrobbers storm into a bank. The leader of the robbers orders everyone to remain still and to hand over the money or "this'll happen to you," at which point he shoots one of the other bank robbers. This sequence of events repeats itself several times until the lead robber, trying to intimidate a hostage he has taken, makes a threat by shooting his final accomplice, the driver of his getaway car, resulting in a car crash and the hostage simply

immediate symbols, essentially placing the symbol (and its bearer) into a social context where the relevance of the symbol/object's presence is highlighted or downplayed. The juxtaposition of symbols and their active inclusion in interactions—positional processes (Turner 1967)—can communicate a great deal, but remain dependent on an understanding of the symbolic meaning, whether or not it is intended to be communicated: fleeing from a man with a gun would generally be considered rational, while fleeing from a uniformed police officer—also a person with a gun—would more likely be considered suspicious behavior to an uninvolved observer.

Symbols that work at a representative level are more internalized, or have a more direct connection in meaning to the thing they represent. All symbols need some context in which to be interpretable, but while immediate, actionable, symbols can be understood solely based on what they can do, a representational symbol implies more about not just the symbol itself but also about the person, place or thing that bears it. A police officer may understand his patrol cruiser as a representational symbol when he sees how other drivers react to its presence without needing to directly communicate that speeders will be fined or reckless drivers will be punished. Different practices can be used to indicate either immediate or representational symbolism; this is of primary relevance in cases where, lacking additional context, immediate contexts will likely take precedence, intended or not; that is, some objects, unless explained or otherwise justified, will almost always present a meaning based on what they are immediately capable of. The immediate symbol of the police most likely to be also take on a representational role is that which most immediately represents the capability of the police to use force: the gun.

5.4.3 The Gun and the Symbolism of Police Training

There is no greater symbol for the relationship of police and violence than that of the handgun. The development of police training, from the early days of August

walking away to continue his daily routine. The absurdity of the scene lies in the simple fact that it is not necessary to actually shoot someone to demonstrate how a gun works, and comes across (as depicted) as simply unreflexive and poorly planned. At the same time, many scenes in films and television have shown villainous characters casually and willfully murdering their own henchmen or allies simply to demonstrate how villainous or remorseless they actually are, but in these cases the message, the second action, is not simply about the violence but about the relative powerlessness of individuals who have lost the trust of (or become useless to) the villain.

Vollmer in Berkeley to high tech specialized training today, is to a significant degree simply the history of weapons training. (Kraska 2007, Chappell 2008) The efforts to professionalize police and create specialists from mere watchmen essentially focused on the core activity which Bittner saw as legally, socially and morally a last resort—the use of deadly force. Discussing the use of force and police expertise, Bittner states that:

> [i]t is, or should be, a source of embarrassment to everybody who undertakes to talk about police practice that he has virtually nothing to say about the exercise of physical coercion. Only the use of firearms is somewhat regulated. Policemen usually receive some instruction on how to use firearms and many departments require regular marksmanship practice. All this is of slight importance, however, because in the United States the pistol is not mainly a tool but an emblem the symbolic value of which draws on history and myth. Thus, the discussion about the role of firearms cannot refer only to practical need or use. (1970: 101–102)

The situation has greatly changed since Bittner's day, with use of force training expanded, given a veneer of science, and even corporately sponsored with specific commercial programs being offered in the US by the National Rifle Association, Smith and Wesson and various other organizations. (Balko 2013, Kraska 2007) Journalists in particular have been fascinated and shocked by the injection of resources into providing local police with military-style equipment and to the extent that this militarization has seemingly impacted the culture of policing. (Bauer 2014) Both critics of the police and those supporting a more aggressive police tend to agree that increased firearms training—particularly the use of 'shoot / don't shoot' scenario training—is desirable, overlooking the effect this training may have in cementing 'crime fighter mentalities' within occupational cultures or in biasing police decision making towards the use of force. A recent controversy in the US city of Minneapolis has revolved around the use of "Warrior cop" training. This style of training—based specifically on military training—emphasizes the capacity to use and the actual use of force, informing officers that they are the 'sheepdogs' who protect the sheep from the wolves. (Cobb 2017) The city of Minneapolis banned this form of training—which included a program entitled "the Bulletproof Warrior" attended by the officer involved in the controversial 2016 shooting of Philando Castile—prompting the police union to offer to pay for any officers willing to defy the city. This has become a popular debate within policing social media, with significant criticism leveled at the mayor for not understanding the realities of police work or being 'soft on crime.' (Shackford 2019) In this case, the role of police as experts based on experience is being used to defend the type of training that should be required

for police work: but if this training is seen as practical for police, as better fitting with the police self-image or simply supported by a vocal minority to better provide themselves a front stage platform in public discussions remains unclear. Yet by emphasizing the 'warrior' nature of the police and not just firearms training but the need to be prepared to "kill any person you meet" (Cobb 2017) the gun is reinforced not just as a symbol of the office, but specifically as a symbol for potential deadly force.

5.4.4 "I Don't Want to Hurt Anybody": Police and Symbolic Violence in Rural Communities

The previous discussion has been primarily based in either the American policing literature, or literature heavily influenced by studies of urban North American or British departments. An examination of the ubiquitousness of policing culture must consider the role violence does (or does not) play as a component in presenting and maintaining an image of police work within occupational cultures. The approach of Egon Bittner was to examine how meaning—in this case the meaning of force and violence legally and normatively—was created through situational and organizationally-constrained interaction. The criticism put forth by Peter Manning (2013) is that Bittner's conclusions have been recycled and applied to police *in general*, regardless of differences in local conditions. The differences not just between policing in the US and Germany, and not just between urban and rural, but between the specific setting and context under review in the present work and every outside case are all of great relevance here to developing a understanding of the complex nature of policing and the social interactions that take place within its framework. (Mawby 1999, Hendriks and van Hulst 2015)

The research site of Falkenmark—and in a broader sense the type of ethnography planned from the earliest stages—was chosen specifically with the expectation that actual violence was unlikely to play a major role in routine police work due to its predominantly rural nature and relatively low and sparse population. In a country with already generally low crime rates and significantly less expectations of major crime events (mass shootings, hostage situations etc.) than the US, the rural areas of Germany could be expected to present a challenge to a conception of police work centered around violence and crime-fighting.

This alternative has been less often identified in the literature, but it is likely that the relationship of violence and policing varies particularly in rural or small-town and the predominant focus on high-resource urban departments within

policing research has simply overgeneralized one aspect of a (hypothetical) universal policing culture. (Wells et al. 2004) Even in urban departments, violence is often compartmentalized and specialized with certain jurisdictions and specialized units likely encountering the greatest or implementing the greatest proportion of violence and also internalizing it as part of their image of what police is to the greatest degree. This is of particular relevance outside of the US, where armed response squads in the UK and specialized units for making arrests in Germany are intended to downplay the 'crime fighter' aspects of patrol officers. (Behr 2000, Squires and Kennison 2010) The officers central to the current study either did not see or chose not to present violence or even overt coercion as the core of their self-image, relating 'war stories' or 'horror stories' within expected 'canteen culture' arenas—ostensibly, at least in some cases, for my benefit—but spending significantly more time discussing stories relating to identified social problems or non-violent forms of problem solving. Additional examples suggested that these narratives were not simply front-stage presentations to avoid undue focus on violence or other 'critical' issues in policing, as the narratives portraying violence as *consistently* undesirable outnumbered even those where it was presented neutrally, as a tool to be used properly, etc. Notably, several Revierpolizei officers (including one unit leader) admitted to very often going unarmed on foot patrol, leaving their service weapon locked inside the station. This was a breach of regulations, but justified—similar to several "cautionary tales" related to me—with statements such as, "any case where I would need to shoot is a case where I could only make things worse."

Broader cultural differences of course play a role, and will be addressed elsewhere. Arguments have been put forth often enough that police culture most brightly reflects 'mainstream' culture, and the differences in attitudes and common meanings attributed to firearms between the US and other countries may do more to explain the differences in attitudes and common meanings attributed by police in Germany than any particular aspect of police work or the police organization. The Revierpolizei in particular bears a mandate emphasizing community access and positive community relations which could be difficult to reconcile with an emphasis on the capacity to use force. However, this work is not in the end an analysis or summary of a particular police department but rather an exploration into the processes and negotiations of various individuals and groups within an organization and institution: my interest is finding both similarities and divergence within the same setting, and explaining it within its own context. Several aspects related to violence and particularly (the symbolism of) firearms stand out.

5.4.5 The Gun as a Representation of Policing?

The focus of police expertise on the use of weapons, previously described, seemed to be essentially lacking throughout the course of my fieldwork. This is not to say that weapons were not present (they were present in almost every police-related setting, fitting with the observations of Van Maanen [1980]) or never discussed—but the rhetorical use of weapons to provide explanations or in telling stories was rare, muted and tended to emphasize the officer's reluctance to use them. Anecdotal evidence suggested that police may have been conscious of their role as armed responders but simply did not share the understanding of the connection between police and weapons technology implied by the (US) literature previously discussed. Notably, in two of the three main stations within the county, visiting the armory and 'showing off' weapons and hardware only occurred spontaneously as the final part of my introductory tour—and in the headquarters station I was never shown the armory at all and only later asked if I 'needed to see it.'

The role of the field researcher may be significant in relation to this point. My status as an American was highly relevant, coming up very often in conversation, and was very often used as a reference point in discussing the officers' individual and institutional conceptions of police work. Apart from the practical use of this in establishing rapport with officers, the basic dichotomy of US / German policing led to the officers I accompanied presenting their own normative or moral system of policing narratively, very often with statements in the form of, 'in the US they might do *this*, but here we wouldn't do that.'[13] These types of statements tended to associate American policing with a higher degree of violence, including extra-legal or racially motivated violence, than they would either consider normal or personally find acceptable in their own local context. This is not to say that these statements are necessarily reflective of either an organizational or the officer's own system of norms and values, however: these statements are best considered as speech acts, presented in a front-stage scenario between researcher and representative of the institution and social group under

[13] The shooting of Michael Brown by a Ferguson, Missouri police officer and the subsequent public demonstrations and confrontations between multiple police departments with unclear or overlapping jurisdictions and protestors took place during a field stay. This became a frequent topic of discussion, although the officers were in general aware of the specifics of the ongoing situations apparently mostly from images or social media, with one officer asking me why police in the US are so "violence-prone" ("Gewaltbereit"), and another commenting on how they "look like soldiers."

observation.[14] (cf. Atkinson and Delamont 2006) The relevance lies in the use of associations and stereotypes in drawing boundaries between an idea of policing in the US and the presentation of policing in Brandenburg.

At one point during a site visit at the smallest of the three stations weapon inspections were taking place. Every officer needed to submit their weapon to be checked by a team from Potsdam, the state capital, and the weapon would then either be certified or replaced. This took most of the day and was for me an opportunity to talk to a more varied group of officers apart from the Revierpolizei unit, such as the detectives. I entered the division head's office to find it full of handguns placed upon both tables and the desk. An officer who I had accompanied on duty twice before commented, "just like home, eh?" ("Genau wie Zuhause, oder?") Various other similar jokes were made during the course of the inspection which played on the stereotype that an American should be interested in and an expert on firearms, while the local officers—differing from the inspection team—presented themselves as not particularly interested in guns. The idea of guns as a *representative* symbol of seemed to be rejected here, or at least of minimal relevance. While guns could be considered tools or even manifestly symbolic, they did not appear to represent a higher-level symbol that police were expected to respond to as part of their self-image.

5.4.6 Imagining Violence: Firearms

On two consecutive days I accompanied two different Revierpolizei units to the same training facility (outside of either of their normal jurisdictions.) Training focused primarily on firearms, using modern systems that display targets or scenarios on the wall and register live-fire hits or misses. Although security and safety were taken very seriously and explained to me both by trainers and some of the officers I was with, my overall impression of the atmosphere on both days

[14] One only indirectly related anecdote comes to mind: while teaching at a German police academy in Hessen, I was shown an issue of the official state police magazine, featuring an article about a German police officer who made an 'academic' exchange to a US police department. The entire department including the German officer was depicted posing for the camera brandishing weapons (apparently paintball markers rather than actual firearms), and the German policing students responded along the lines of, "That's so American!" My response was only to question whether that was the only photograph available from the US department or was simply the one that the German editors found to best represent American policing.

was, as recorded in my field notes, “like a field trip.” The setting was fundamentally different than any other type of routine working day, with officers who normally work individually and often spend only an hour or two in the office per day all riding together in a van, and then waiting together for their turn to complete firearm qualifications which in practice are not that very different from playing a game. The officers did not seem to consider this as part of their normal work either, with one officer referring to it as “something we have to do.” Officer Karsten, who I accompanied into the shooting hall, seemed especially to separate the qualification process as something far removed from the image of his work which he had attempted to present to me in the days we had previously spent together. During a training scenario where he was required to fire to hit a target once at a minimum, he fired three rounds at the target and then shouted “America!”, then once more three rounds then “America! Bang bang bang!” This was still within the parameters of the scenario, and Officer Karsten still passed his qualification, but I interpreted the performance as specifically intended for me essentially commenting on my assumed expectations of police work as an American. It would not be possible to evaluate if this should be considered ‘taking training seriously’ or not, but it indicated a disconnect between the artificial evaluation scenario and the expectation of the job itself. The continuous association of firearm use and expertise with *American* policing suggested a distancing from not only the stereotypical associations between US police and guns but also from the symbolism of guns: by making jokes about the presence of guns within a police setting, the officer of the Revierpolizei were challenging the centrality of violence to the policing role. While the presence of gun and its possession by a police officer was inseparable from most conceptualizations of policing, its use and even the symbolism and indication of its potential use were not within the normative routine for Revierpolizei officers.

5.4.7 Immediate and Representative Symbols of Violence: From Symbolic Potential to Intention

The use of force was presented by the Revierpolizei officers—as well as others in separate units I accompanied—as a specialized task requiring not only training but experience. Observing the Revierpolizei during firearms qualification suggested a disconnect between the expectations of the job and the more regulatory expectations of firearms expertise. A similar disconnect was evident in one specific case involving baton training, taking place on the same day at the same location. An officer was armed with a police baton and faced with a police

trainer wearing padded armor and equipped with a padded shield. The trainer, simulating an aggressive suspect, would gradually approach the officer who was expected to follow procedure by issuing a verbal warning and then eventually strike the suspect with the baton. The trainer simulated a hostile suspect using informal language and slurs, essentially “you got a problem, pig?” (“Was suchst du hier, Bulle?”) The officer made several attempts to respond using very formal language, “Please remain where you are or I will need to use my baton” (“Bleiben Sie stehen oder ich mache mein Schlagstock zum Verwenden.”) but was unable to both complete the sentence and hit the trainer in the first few attempts. The officer stumbled over the words and was visibly surprised or startled as the trainer closed the distance between the two. The scenario—observed by the other officers present—took on more of a lighthearted nature, but the officer continued to attempt to complete the exercise following this interpretation of strict procedure despite the trainer’s suggestions to “say it simpler.” The need to speak politely and without demonstrating bias or disrespect seemed to be more important than the situational exigencies, in this case the need to speak quickly and clearly and react all within a few seconds. The response of the other officers—to view and discuss it in this way, rather than as a ‘failure’—suggested that for the officer involved, at a minimum, the type of situation is something that would be very unlikely to occur and the training exercise was more formality than something to take overly seriously. A police officer who is unable to insult and then hit suspects was not necessarily presented as a bad police officer, just as an officer who does not expect to use their sidearm in their entire career was not presented as an officer who has never lived up to their full capabilities. The baton—at least within the context of this training scenario—was interpreted almost as a representational, non-actionable, symbol by the officer, with more emphasis given to the issuing of commands rather than the implied potential threat of the brandishing of the baton. (cf. Sturm 2011) The presentation of the trainer emphasized that, essentially, the baton could effectively speak for itself and would only require a type of verbal anchorage or confirmation that the drawn baton was indeed an immediate threat to the addressee; the officer’s response suggested contradictory assumptions, with the verbal message intended to be complete and explicit in a way that could potentially be effective—at least in being properly understood—whether or not the officer was holding a baton.

Sturm (2011) describes how in certain, violent, situations police can essentially become an object, become the weapon. The use of violence, particularly the more ‘intimate,’ up-close violence of crowd control and the use of the baton, is described as, “not pretty, but brutal” (Sturm 2011: 326) even in cases where its use is measured, effective and professional. These types of situations strip away

the immediacy of the representational meaning and leave only the immediate transition from potential to action: it is still important that the baton belongs to a police officer, that it carries the force of law, but this meaning is drowned out by the swing of the baton happening right now. When the immediate symbolism of the weapon predominates the bearer of that weapon loses the authority to define the situation beyond the constraints and contexts imposed by the weapon. Even in a training scenario, the officer attempted to maintain the weapon-as-representation, enacting coercion through the authority which the baton (and uniform, and the very concept of policing) represent(s) and only secondarily by the fact that the baton could enforce coercion once swung. The officer demonstrated a reluctance to *become* the weapon, to allow it to become more than a tool, by formally stating that which could have simply been implied, underscoring the fact that the weapon not only has a voice, but is rarely silent, and if an officer does not want it to speak for itself, that officer may need to speak clearly and first.

5.4.8 Contextualizing Violence

Only one incident of serious police violence occurred during my field stay. The Revierpolizei (Officer Karsten) were called in to support the public order office (Ordnungsamt), who had been called to support city officials who were accompanying inspectors from the fire department. A resident who was known to the police was specifically required to allow fire department inspectors into his house once per year due to his use of an open fireplace. Officer Karsten explained to me that a similar ritual played out every year: the man would refuse to open the door for the inspectors, and additional support agencies up to the police would arrive until the man eventually relented, or the police would open the door themselves. Officer Karsten, accompanied by another officer, knocked on the door and announced that he was from the police. A few moments later the door flung open and the man charged out and attempted to tackle the officer, and a few minutes after that Officer Karsten had the man pinned down on the ground. The inspection continued as normal, and in the end the man was released but it was almost certain he would eventually be charged and likely arrested for assaulting an officer. The entire scene lasted only a few seconds and the 'threat' was resolved before anyone else reacted in any significant way. Two contextual aspects of this incident stood out.

Firstly, this was the most overt case of physical coercion which I observed, and the development of events and established background information leading up to

the encounter were highly relevant even when considering that the use of force by Officer Karsten was in direct and immediate reaction to an attack on him. The situation had been described to me as if it were a ritual or a game, where both parties would threaten to escalate the situation but the man in the house would eventually allow the inspectors in. All the involved parties had expectations of the situation from the outset, but for the police, at least, the result was non-negotiable and the only unknowns were at one point the man would relent and whether or not it would be necessary to forcibly open the door. The scene was one of coercion before the police even arrived, but the symbolic role of the police to symbolically carry out violence was seen as far more decisive than the actual use of force which was not considered a normal part of this routine. The presence of the police alone was expected to tip the scales enough into gaining cooperation. The resident himself had previously described as "strange" and an "outsider" who was, at least for the Revierpolizei, primarily known through this annual ritual. He was described as a "Wessi" (West German) who had moved to Brandenburg shortly after unification—when property prices were extremely low—but had never integrated into the local community. The property was not well maintained, with overgrown grass and several windows boarded up, and Officer Karsten commented that "neighbors don't get along with him," although it was unclear if this translated into situations involving the police. The entire scene was observed by a half dozen neighbors, mostly watching through windows but some came out to the sidewalk, and one or two conversed with the city officials who had been the first to attempt to negotiate cooperation. Even though there had been no specific indication that violence was expected or likely—at least not overtly communicated, although I was instructed to remain on the sidewalk with the others while the two officers approached the house—the situation is one in which the type of coercion involved and the background scenario made the use of actual physical force a plausible outcome. The man, considered by police, and probably by neighbors, an outsider, lacked resources or social capital that could be leveraged to 'save face' in this scenario, and the only action he could take which would impact the overall setting would be to open the door which would at the same time effectively relinquish his control—except in this case because he simultaneously opened the door, ending the stalemate, but then also attacked the police officer, demonstrating resistance and altering the type of encounter. That the man was held on the ground while the inspection continued reinforced the idea that the police were effectively there as a support organization to ensure the normal function of the diverse array of municipal agencies; the use of violence in this situation did not effectively transform the development or outcome as it was occurring, even though it had the potential to.

Bittner (1970) famously compared police officers to sociologists, and in this case that perspective seems to be reflected in a macro / micro discrepancy. Police work is made up of individual situations, events and encounters which constitute the police *habitus* and constitutive view of society and their local community. (cf. Chan 2004) This situation, even with the clearly invoked specter of violence and the use of the police primarily as assistance for other agencies based on the ability to *theoretically* use force, was apparently viewed as a ritual of expressions and power—and one which the side of the police was essentially destined to win; violence changed the rules of this game in a way, altering dynamics and stripping concepts of private property and rights of their immediate relevance. Violence, as constructed by many of the Revierpolizei officers and Officer Karsten in particular, seemed to be compartmentalized and only take the foreground outside of the social boundaries—and often physical boundaries—of the local community. At the same time, and as was emphasized by this encounter, the potential for violence is entwined in the function of the police—the police were called in by other official agencies because of their capacity to 'get things done'—and occasional reminders that violence does occur could and often are expected by police in their everyday routine work. This discrepancy can be further explored through the way police officers talk about violence, regardless of how that impacts the work they do.

The previous two examples are primarily performative and can only essentially be analyzed in that context. The involved officers used humor in situations which could at least potentially be expected to be treated differently due to the involvement of firearms and the assumed association of them with violence and deadly force. In practical terms, these situations facilitated the establishment of rapport by allowing the officers to break from a more solemn performative front-stage role, legitimizing their role and work by taking it seriously. My role as an outsider, specifically as an American and, through the use of questions, apparently assuming I had some knowledge on the practice of policing in the US, had been established and reinforced. This type of humor assumed a shared, if caricatured, assumption of the 'crime fighter image' and by using this image as a source of humor it placed a fascination with weapons or violence into the realm of the profane. Notably, this appeared to extend only to this fascination, rather than a respect or disregarding the concept of violence as a component of police work at all. The impression conveyed to me was that the use of weapons was seen as something reactive—as a potential situation that could or even should be considered in advance—but to which no 'good cop' (at least not within the Revierpolizei units I was with) would look forward to or be excited about. The

presentation of violence in recounting—in the narrative—framed it in a way that both demystified it and distanced it from their own routine behavior.

5.4.9 Transforming Symbols

"If you're gonna shoot, shoot! Don't talk."

– Tuco, *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (1966, dir: Sergio Leone)

The immediate symbols presented—the police officer's gun and baton—represent *in all contexts* the potential for violence. Alongside these two prominent examples one could include additional policing tools related to coercion such as handcuffs, pepper spray, tasers (which were notably not used in Brandenburg at the time of the field research, but are currently being implemented in several other German states) and even flashlights. When interpreted purely through their immediate symbolism, these objects are continuously 'violent.' This violence on its own remains purely potential, unless accompanied by any attributed intent, motive or possibility that could transform it into actual violence. (cf. Mills 1940) Objects can never be interpreted *purely* through their immediate symbolism; some outside context, representational symbolism, the juxtaposition of additional symbols, and the communicative practices and actions of the actor who controls the object will determine to what extent the immediacy of the object can or cannot take precedence within an encounter. This is of particular relevance when considering that any physical object, as well as the human body itself, could potentially be used as a weapon, in many cases even as a deadly weapon. Yet most objects do not bear the necessarily immediate symbolism to be primarily seen as weapons unless additional indications are given and *preparatory actions* are taken, such as raising a stone over one's head as if to throw it.

This potentiality of the symbols of violence allow for, and often require, careful impression management to allow the bearer to take control of situations or establish the desired power dynamic. In the same way that a bank robber with a toy pistol may be able to effectively make threats up until he attempts to fire the gun, the police can often 'profit' from the potential for violence that is inextricable from their more basic image but can also find themselves limited once certain preparatory actions have been taken or ruled out. The institutional image of policing most clearly benefits from the recognizable capacity to use force significantly emphasized by Bittner (1970) Police officers distancing themselves from an imagined institutional authority can attempt to establish a more personal connection, among other practices, by removing their perceived 'tactical

advantage' and therefore downplaying the potential for actual violence: avoiding taking preparatory actions that might be sufficient or supplement if not necessary: an extreme case could be an officer has already drawn and aimed his at a 'disorderly' suspect, attempting to calm the suspect verbally, lowering the weapon and making it (at least, by appearances) a less one-sided conflict if either party transforms the interaction into a purely physical, violent conflict. More common and everyday practices observed frequently among the Revierpolizei were simply getting physically closer to individuals in encounters: this reduces the ostensive tactical advantage police would have as officers lose the greater range advantage of firearms and risk being unable to draw their firearm, baton, or other equipment if violence were to suddenly erupt. Realistically, officers are not likely to be interpreting most of these situations as a willful act of putting one's guard down or a de-escalation, but rather simply approaching the situation in a way that appears natural. The more militant advice in some (US) policing circles to "be prepared to kill everyone you meet" (Cobb 2017) is—for most—not intended to be taken literally in the cases of close friends and family; these applications of "safe categories" certainly apply to a wider range of individuals, particularly in cases where the police have both measuredly lower risks of immediate danger and lower individual perceptions of danger, e.g. community-oriented police in low-crime rural areas.

This means that the ability of police—specifically the Revierpolizei in Falkenmark—to engage in situational image work or handle situations informally by distancing themselves from an ideal type image of the police may be—at a theoretical level—to a significant degree dependent on the already existent and universally perceivable association of the police with violence.[15] Bittner's argument emphasized the types of tasks police become involved in the fact that the

[15] Though not directly relevant to the current study, this model could be used to explain the situationally offered meanings in cases of excessive force or demonstrative violence more often reported in the 'classical' US policing literature. (Skolnick 1971, Westley 1970) In the same way that the 'standard' police role brings with it certain expectations, abilities, and also boundaries, obviously and overtly violating this role while maintaining an authoritative situation posture (e.g. smashing a taillight on a car and then telling the driver that he is in violation due to the broken light, beating an unarmed suspect while proclaiming that the officer did no such thing, yelling "Stop resisting!" while breaking a suspects arm, and so on) can establish a more hostile type of situational authority, in which the involved individuals realize that their behavior is being evaluated neither by the formalized rules of the institution nor by a negotiated intersubjective agreement of normality, but rather by more individualized and power-focused perceptions of the specific officer(s). A more generalized trend in this direction could arguably be see in the increasing tendency of police in the US to use military styled gear even in situations where no legitimate reason is presented (e.g. 'forest camouflage' as the standard 'tactical uniform' for special units and 'riot cops,' and the use of military-style

capacity to use force strengthened and secured the ability of police to find a way to solve problems. A critical dimension is the symbolism also associated with violence and how this can challenge, mediate, or channel the relationship between police and community or police officer and individuals. Police officers can distance themselves from the typical police role and its potential for violence, but at the same time reserve the right to pivot back to an institutional footing, and the use of discretion by police in some situations likely doesn't undermine their ability to intervene later if the situation can be framed properly (as an emergency, as violent, etc.)

The symbolism of violence, as was found in Falkenmark, plays a more significant role in further representing ideas, concepts, and reproductions of 'normality' than in specifically and overtly governing everyday interactions—that is, the role that violence arguably played was predominantly through its avoidance, through the distancing police used and the perceptions of individuals that continued to see violence as a distant, unlikely, or even impossible outcome. The role of violence was more visible and direct in narratives. Police talked about their communities as peaceful and some individuals as chaotic. They talked about how most days are routine or even boring but "you never know who might be carrying a knife." Violence played many roles in many stories, and these stories showed both how the officers viewed and needed to view their community and how central violence, as a concept, as a symbol, and as a representation, was to the very idea of policing.

5.5 Narratives of Violence

> "I kill thee, make thee away, translate thy life into death, thy liberty into bondage. I will deal in poison with thee, or in bastinado, or in steel. I will bandy with thee in faction. I will o'errun thee with policy. I will kill thee a hundred and fifty ways. Therefore tremble and depart."
>
> – Touchstone, *As You Like It*, Act 5, Scene 1

Stories about violence could take a variety of forms, and implement violence in different ways: as a source of conflict, as a way to resolve conflict, as something morally deserved, as a test of physical or mental attributes, as a social problem,

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rifles in serving arrests in urban areas), where it is unclear if the 'messaging' is an attempt to change the institutional image of the police or to simply make a statement about who is in control. (Fisher 2010, Balk 2013)

etc. (cf. Ewick and Silbey 1995, Athens 1997) While actual interactions involving physical violence were rare, cases of officers (mostly unprompted) telling stories that involved violence in some capacity were common, primarily to me individually but also to other officers: for example, in the break room or over lunch, the typical ‘canteen culture’ settings. (cf. Waddington 1999) The narratives of violence recounted to me instead were mostly of a cautionary nature, normative tales explaining risks or undesirable situations that could likely have been avoided. The typical self-image of police as recounted through “war stories” within the ‘canteen’ culture tends to be of “crime fighters on a mission in a dangerous environment” (van Hulst 2013: 624), but both the types of stories I encountered and their apparent ‘function’ or lesson differed greatly for the most part. Rather than stories emphasizing community hostility or likening the use of police as a sort of trial by fire through which a rookie becomes a ‘real’ officer, the stories I was told or that were told in my presence generally emphasized the risks and potential unintended consequences of attempting to use violence. (cf. Ford 2003, Loftus 2009b, Kurtz and Upton 2017)

Actual violence by police is relatively rare when compared to all police encounters, and even encounters where violence is hinted at are likely uncommon for most officers. Unsurprisingly, for the Revierpolizei in Falkenmark violence is something that is talked about much more than it is experienced. Most officers had never drawn their weapon outside on a resident. Stories about violence were, however, not uncommon. These stories were likely common specifically because of the perceived uniqueness of the events, as well as for the implied teaching function of them, i.e. either learning what to do from positive examples or learning what to avoid from negative ones. Due to the nature of rural (community) policing (cf. Young 1993, Huey and Ricciardelli 2015, Ohder and Schöne 2018) a significant amount of time was spent in transit; Revierpolizei officers generally work alone, and in this case the presence of a field-researcher changed this dynamic; officers had time and an audience to share their accumulated stories. Violence often played a role in these stories, often being the major topic of a story, but the specific function it played in the story varied. Sometimes it was explicit, with great detail given to how violence was carried out, to the visceral experience of the enactor of violence, the recipient, or observers; other times it was implicit and assumed to be understood as a narrative connection without much detail at all. Violence served both a functional role, in which events were sequentially linked by violent acts (e.g. a gun being fired and then a person being injured,) and a indicial or indexing role, in which additional detail could be provided that is not strictly necessary to following the major ‘plot,’ such as describing an individual as “someone who gets into a lot of fights.” (cf. Barthes

2004) The analysis of these narrative of violence—drawn primarily from stories told but also from the use of narrative within encounters or in more formal contexts—focused not so much on the overarching plot or composition of the narrative as on the specific use of violence as a mechanism for connecting or describing elements. Violence was often presented in the context of motive, i.e. "a rule which depicts the social character of the act itself." (Blum and McHugh 1971: 100, cf. Sudnow 1965, Burke 1969) Functional and indicial elements, as presented by Barthes, relate respectively to 'doing' and 'being,' emphasizing that violence can be presented both as a pure physical action (which practically will bear further socially-derived implications) as well as a descriptor or characteristic typically based on a normative moral system (cf. Campbell 1991): a variety of presentations are to be expected, if for no other reason than the fact that police have a vested interest in justifying their use of force while maintain cultural narratives associating criminal behavior or deviance with violence and ultimately with a broader array of social evils. (cf. Manning 1980, Waegel 1984, Presser 2012)

The narrative role played by violence differed between the stories told, but some patterns were identifiable. Notably, emotions such as rage, frustration, shame, humiliation, or even love or compassion, which are often cited in biographic accounts or contextual explorations of violent acts (Katz 1988, Presser 2012, Sandberg et al. 2015) were almost never included in narratives of violence, and never in accounts of violence enacted by the police.

Violence differed significantly in how it was used within stories; different *narrative mechanisms* could be interpreted in how the inclusion of violence in a story structured the overall narrative and connected characters, actions and events. Violence could play various roles within a narrative, such as simply describing actions or concluding a story and implying a moral or lesson. Apart from describing actions central to the plot, it can also be used to provide background or backstory to frame the primary action or contextual, describe or flesh out characters or relationships. Violence can be committed by identified social actors, groups, unidentified actors (e.g. "someone in the crowd threw a rock"), or can be simply just occur (e.g. "a lot of people got hurt"), and may or may not specifically be associated with a defined victim. It can be 'successful', attempted or intended violence, just as individuals described as committing violent acts could be also described 'violent,' but the latter could also refer to those simply perceived, by the narrator or others, as capable of engaging or likely to engage in violence. It can be presented as a phenomenon requiring further explanation or even defying explanation or as a matter-of-course, as fantastical or everyday, as sacred or as profane.

Two primary differences in narrative mechanisms of violence were determined based on the narratives involving violence, deviance and police work, primarily from Revierpolizei officers in Falkenmark but also including some narratives by officers in other units and retired officers who were encountered or accompanied during field stays. These differences involved how violence was presented causally and whether it was affixed to a situation (immediate or ongoing) or one or more individuals. Some narratives of violence explore its causes—at a root level, e.g. "he was from a poor neighborhood, so he learned that sometimes you have to throw the first punch," or in a more direct sequential manner, e.g. "someone spilled a drink on someone else, and then things escalated, and pretty soon someone threw the first punch." Other narratives remain silent as to the causes of the violence described, focusing instead on its immediate impact or aftermath, or else implying—but without specifically stating—that its ontology is self-evident, irrelevant or 'natural.'

5.5.1 Deterministic and Attributed Violence

Narrative mechanisms can in this way be divided between *deterministic*, which are more victim-oriented an in which the broader narrative focuses on the lead up to the violence and its outbreak is reduced to an implied cause and effect formula, and *attributed*, focused more on the actor who engages in violence. In narratives where deterministic mechanisms are central to the plot, the overall narrative tends to focus on the lead up to violence or potential violence, including as important (even if unstated) elements the actions, reactions and personal characteristics that, inevitably, within the narrative, lead to certain characters encountering violence, which very often forms the conclusion or at least a major turning point in the story; deterministic narratives are the stories of violence. Narratives centered on attributed violence can include it anywhere in the plot, either as an outcome of a chain of events or actions or as background describing characters, framing the narrative, or foreshadowing events to come. These are stories of other actions or characters where violence forwards, mitigates, or foreshadows the action in relation to who the actors are, were, or have become.

Violence presented as a deterministic reaction often implied something deserved or possibly a form of 'justice' but generally emphasized that violence is often, from the perspective of the narrator, predictable once certain conditions are met. Deterministic violence simply occurs as a result of actions taken earlier, and while the violence is likely committed by a human actor, little or no attention is given to their motivation, reasoning or understanding, with the focus of the story

instead on the likely victim and how their actions or status triggers violent acts. Attributed violence narratives presented it as an active choice by a social actor, though in few cases was the agency of the actor defined or explored, and the association of violence with the actor was primarily constructed through implied (and, rarely, explicit) assumptions about either the social role (i.e. as a police officer) or personal characteristics of the individual engaging in violent behavior.

5.5.2 Violent Situations and Violent Individuals

The second significant division was between describing *violent situations*, in which the violence occurred primarily as a mechanism for concluding the narrative or as a moral lesson in itself, and describing *violent individuals*, in which case the violence committed by these individuals serves a narrative purpose of explaining context, background or making a claim about social facts but does not on its own resolve the plot (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Narrative mechanisms of violence

	Violent situations	**Violent individuals**
Deterministic violence	Outside consequences	Symbolic assailants
Attributed violence	Consequences of failure	Warning signs

Four specific roles of violence were identified in recurring in forms of narratives presented by police within ‘canteen culture’ situations as well as anecdotes and stories recounted directly to me or in front of others. These narrative forms position violence different within the narrative and thereby imply a different meaning, even when violence isn’t central to the story or fleshed out within the narrative. The forms are:

1. Outside consequences
2. Symbolic assailants
3. Consequences of failure
4. Warning sign

While violence can be narratively used in many other forms, these forms stood out to due to their relationship with the types of stories being recounted. Scholars

exploring police storytelling have often analyzed the meaning of specific stories (cf. Waegel 1984, Ford 2003) or the setting and process of storytelling (van Hulst 2013), but this narrative analysis is specifically on the use of violence within the story, essentially how it relates to the plot: the significance of violence not just to police culture but as a break in (most forms of) normal interaction means that when violence is involved in a story it usually plays a significant role in describing characters, altering relations, determining outcomes, or in presenting moral claims.[16] (Sandberg et al. 2015) Other narrative uses of violence, even within this typology, are certainly possible, but these four categories stood out both for their contrasts in how violence affected the larger story being told and for the general distancing from violence as a positive value or desired outcome. (cf. Van Maanen 1980, Ford 2003)

Outside consequences refer to an essentially deterministic outcome in which the behavior of a social actor (usually a non-police individual but in some cases also police officers) leads to them being confronted with a violent (re)action, without specifically attributing agency or intent to the violence: e.g. a story of an individual who is punished for drunk driving but continues the behavior, and then is seriously injured or killed in a car accident. These types of stories are essentially morality plays, isolating the behavior or characteristics of a social actor and blaming them for triggering the violence that they become victim of.[17] (cf. Waegel 1984) This form could include narratives in which officers describe their own use of force with justifications such as “he made me do it” or “that’s just what happens.” (cf. Van Maanen 1980) Notably, outside consequence narratives can often be found in the rhetoric of policing research, where use of police by

[16] Arthur Frank (2010) writes: “the study of stories I propose is less about finding themes and more about asking what stories do, which is to inform human life.” (2) Similarly, the intent here is not to evaluate the validity of the stories told to me (Sandberg 2010) or to evaluate the intent or meaning behind the story, but rather to explore the assumptions made that are necessary for the story to conceptually ‘work.’

[17] An anecdote related to a then-ongoing case did not involve interpersonal violence but shared similar characteristics. An attempted arson was reported in a small village at what was essentially an abandoned house which had been purchased by a "West German" soon after unification and since then never maintained. The officer expressed regret at needing to investigate the case and likely having to punish “local kids,” and suggested it might be better for everyone if the property, which was apparently used by teenagers as a hangout, “simply burned completely” because the owner “doesn’t really own it.” While it was clear that *someone* would have to burn the property down, within this narrative it is essentially irrelevant who does the burning, as the locus is on the act of the owner in purchasing and not maintaining the building, as well as on the risk (and extra work for the police) posed by the dilapidated state of the building.

the force—as a dependent variable—is triggered by actions or factors outside of police control.[18] Violence here is situational; it does not characterize individual, it is not evil or always intended to do harm, it is simply something that happens.

Symbolic assailants (Bittner 1970, Skolnick 1985) represent the presentation of risk in the generalized police occupational culture, it is the inclusion and respective labeling of "any group or action from which resistance might be imagined." (Manning 2004: 3) Similarly to outside consequences, the intent of the violence does not need to be, and very often is not, incorporated into the narrative, but rather than being more-or-less a deserved outcome, the potential victim is a police officer who is *not* being morally maligned or blamed within the course of the story. Despite involving violent individuals into the narrative, the emphasis is not on deeply exploring their motivations or the background of (potential) violence, but rather violence is treated as inevitable: specific individuals are taken as part of a larger group, assuming that some members of the group will engage in violence, and then reducing the individual back to a 'proportion of violence.' Symbolic assailant narratives represent the type of "us vs. them" narrative that is well-represented in the literature on police culture, including in Germany. (Manning 1980, Reuss-Ianni 1983, Marks 2004, Behr 2018) These stories are typically depersonalizing (cf. Presser 2012), removing agency from individual social actors and employing ideal types, stereotypes, and hypothetical situations, even when known individuals are involved. Herbert (1996) provides an example of an LAPD sergeant warning of the risks to police officers from hypothetical assailants:

> While discussing the possibility of hostile action, the sergeant repeatedly mentions the "vermin" that plague Los Angeles, the various people who do not "have a life," the passengers in vans who are often "choosing evil" and are capable of indoctrinating even young children into attacking police officers. (577)

This suggests a moral element; specific, less valued, members of society are being identified and narratively constructed as symbolic assailants. Yet when used as a narrative mechanism, the primary function was to simply make the connection between outside society (however specifically defined) and the potential for violence. The narrative function was simply to establish that these types of groups

[18] E.g. "There are many factors that can trigger physical force from a police officer, but two stand out in the research literature, and both are associated with youth and minority group membership." (Binder and Scarf 1980: 114) Within this 'scientific narrative' the application of force by a police officer is presented as a reactive, deterministic outcome, while being young or a minority is essentially presented as an actively-taken and immediate action.

or individuals exist, to remove even the question of intent from stories of violence and replace it with the basic assumption that some individuals will simply "choose evil."

Symbolic assailants were invoked by the Revierpolizei in describing certain neighborhoods where "we don't go unless we have to… because they don't like us here," and in these types of cases tended to focus on the presumed unpredictability of individual reactions which might even include violence, rather than expecting immediate violence. While these narratives sometimes included elements that attempted to explain or contextual why some individuals might become violent, the purpose of the overall story was still to emphasize the potential risk to police officers, and the potential for violent conflict was, within the narrative, discussed as if it were random, a roll of the dice, rather than a possible outcome of social interactions and communicative offers. These narratives also imply, in contrast to the more typical and personalized narratives of the Revierpolizei, that police work is primarily reactive and based on constructions of risk and dangerous: even simple and common utterances such as "I've never had to draw my gun" imply a lack of discretion as opposed to a selection from available and equally legitimate actions, at least in the realm of physical force. Symbolic assailant narratives tended to be more present or future oriented when compared to the other narrative uses of violence, and while they described (usually hypothetical) groups or individuals, the purpose of the narratives tended to be to describe a situation: specifically, one which served to communicate and highlight risks to the police as well as providing (often pre-emptive) justifications for future decisions by the police. Assuming that some social actors will be hostile and aggressive towards the police, regardless of motive, context, or interactional processes, serves as a justification for the police entering encounters with caution, suspicion, or paranoia.

The earlier example of Officer Karsten being attacked by a resident presents a case of the symbolic assailant being used to further explore an experienced encounter with violence: Officer Karsten's refrain of, "what if he had had an axe?" emphasized the assumption that some individuals will be willing to attack the police and will not distinguish between a still dangerous but not likely to be life-threatening unarmed attack and one using a deadly weapon. Re-exploring and re-imaging this incident with different conditions or outcomes is not simply an analysis of how one handled a specific past incident but is a forward-looking exercise as well, imaging the potential threats yet to be encountered. One threat to a police officer essentially represents all imaginable threats to all police officers. More 'postmodern' examples of the symbolic assailant could be found in

the (essentially offhand) statements made describing which locations and infrastructure in the region need to be watched due to their being the most likely targets of terrorist attacks: these statements tended to come rather late on the first few accompanied shifts, once most key locations and individuals had been discussed and one most recurring problems had been explained, when the officers were still attempting to find 'things to show' that seemed to be justifiably 'police issues.'

Consequences of failure are in some way the mirror image of symbolic assailants: they are identifying the police behavior as that which leads to either violence or to a form of violence which is undesirable; in a way, deterministic outcomes but considering the agency and discretion of the individual officer. These types of narratives were fairly common, particularly in describing how communication was preferred over force. Violence was then often presented as something that "no one wants," and a failure to adequately handle or prepare for a situation. However, unlike in outside force narratives, the violence was not always directed against the police, and often was, employed by the police but still presented negatively. The goal of the police officer was presented in most cases as, corresponding with more 'official' presentations of police practices, one of de-escalation (Mangold 2011), though this could be read to essentially mean that the goal should be to persuade or coerce the suspect to submit to the police definition of the situation without the intimation of physical resistance. One story recounted a former officer who attempted to fire a warning shot to force a fleeing suspect to stop, unintentionally hitting the suspect in the back of the head and killing him.[19] This narrative was essentially a moral tale about the dangers of using a firearm except as a last resort; notably, if this story had emphasized poor marksmanship or lack of training it may have still been a consequences of failure narrative but with a different emphasis, as the story solely put the blame on the decision to shoot in the first place and not the failure of the shot to warn rather than kill. Another story involved an armed bank robbery where the local community officer was the closest on the scene but only arrived after the suspects had shot one person and fled. The 'moral' of the story was expressed as, "if the officer had been there earlier, he likely would have just been shot too." Consequence of failure stories took the normative idea, not entirely foreign to policing perspectives, that interpersonal violence is undesirable, and applied this to policing situations as well, taking the exhortation that violence is only a last

[19] This story was told to me on two occasions but lacking in more specific details. It was described as occurring "years ago" but it was unclear to me if this happened before or after German Reunification as both officers who told me the story had begun their careers in the 1980 s with the Volkspolizei and additionally may have simply been recounting a secondhand story.

resort literally and typically suggesting that if this resort needs to be taken something else was done wrong which could have been done better in the future (and, ideally, the audience can apply this lesson in future encounters.)

Warning sign narratives attribute violent behaviors or tendencies to individuals, making violence not just an immediate societal action, but part of a pattern, symptom, or sign of things to come. While symbolic assailant narratives emphasize that *anyone* (though not necessarily any specific individual) could be violent, warning sign narratives are more personalized and, while not necessarily downplaying violence, consider that the use of violence can increase or decrease over time and be related to additional, possibly harder to spot, factors. Warning sign narratives necessarily have histories and backgrounds while symbolic assailant narratives need not. (cf. Sasson 1995) These narratives fit into the mold of stories about individuals who were known to the police or had been in trouble earlier, and "need to be kept an eye on," but where additional context is given. Several stories were presented about individuals (some of whom were encountered, while other stories were simply presented as anecdotes making a general point) who had been violent or committed assault, engaged in bar fights or domestic violence, often with alcohol or drugs discussed as a likely factor. In many cases these individuals were then described as being sober or clean at the present and therefore less likely to be violent. Other stories focused on social groups or friends who might lead a person into "trouble," with implications that an individual might be, for example, "a good kid" who should not be judged simply based on violent acts, if removing the settings that fostered that type of behavior could remove the risk of future violent acts. These stories were the most contextual, tending not to focus on one specific event, or at least most starting out with it before expanding the scope of the narrative, but rather emphasizing longer-term factors and personal change.

5.5.3 Perspective in Narratives of Violence

The stories I was told by police involving violence were predominantly—though not exclusively—third party stories where the speaker either played a 'bystander' or tertiary role or was not present at all. Symbolic assailant narratives, in particular, were relatively rare when compared to their presentation in the general police culture literature, and tended to focus on "police" as a universal (or, at least, national) concept but without implying that individuals within the local community are likely to be hostile to the police; this contrast could be found in

statements expressing that "many people don't like the police [anymore]" juxtaposed against "people in Falkenmark like us." The specific purpose or reasoning for officers telling these stories to me in the manners they did are indeterminable, but arguably they served some broader purpose of downplaying the significance of violence as the core of police work; the rarity of violence in the daily work of the Revierpolizei both makes the cases where it does occur especially noteworthy even when no obvious 'moral' can be discerned but also makes it harder for police to establish boundaries between those who understand policing and its habitus and those who don't. (cf. Chan 2004) Policing is seen and often presented as a tainted or to some extent stigmatized occupation. Two generic responses to having an identity that violates or clashes with broader social values could be to neutralize or minimize the offending parts of that identity, or to emphasize and brandish them as icons of 'eliteness.' (Hughes 1962, cf. Fassin 2013) Many investigations of policing culture have found evidence suggesting a propensity towards the latter—at least within the investigated organizations—and this in turn has furthered the often-repeated theoretical assumptions of the centrality of not only violence but a specific and unique positioning with regard to violence as a core of the police occupational culture. (Waddington 1999, Behr 2000, Behr 2006)

The varying portrayals of violence are in some ways inconsistent, but they all tacitly accept (if not embrace) the image of an *ideal type* police officer as someone uniquely capable to apply violence correctly in applicable situations. This generally confirms to Ford's (2003) finding that, "rare was the story that glorified physical force." (99) More important was generally what the violence was presented as meaning—correctly applied violence is related to the skills and knowledge, whereas improper violence is presented as social, as well as personal, harm. Outside force narratives reinforce the idea that experiencing violence is a negative outcome, and one often brought about by one's own actions—reflecting both the idea the police seek to prevent behavior they see as risky, even if not immediately so, and the fact that the police using force is, apart from any functional purpose, punishment on its own. Symbolic assailant narratives presume a type of moral superiority of police violence, when it must be used, over that used against the police—this could be best demonstrated in hypothetical hybrid outside force / symbolic assailant narratives, such as presenting a police shooting as "suicide by cop." (Lord and Sloop 2010) These narratives employ forms of neutralization which manage to both present violent as a something negative and socially harmful, while at the same time absolving the police for that violence because the violence simply happened, it is not presented as a "narrative accomplishment" of the storyteller. (Katz 1988: 300, cf. Van Maanen 1980, Presser

2012) The types of “moral narratives” (Sandberg et al. 2015: 1177) that focus on individual protagonists making proper choices and thereby serving as a positive example never included violence as a form of conflict resolution; when violence did resolve a situation, the focus of the narrative was instead on the actions of the ‘problem person,’ the recipient of violence.

Overall, there was an identifiable contrast between the few stories that fit violence into a normative context—e.g. as part of the job, as an acceptable and deserved form of punishment for some individuals—and those that viewed violence as more problematic, critically, or reflexively—generally portraying it as a risk or uncontrollable, as a not-unexpected outcome of negative or poorly thought out behavior, or as having unpredictable and generally negative consequences outside of the bounds of its immediate use. One narrative, recounted in a break-room setting by Officer Wolfgang, who had formerly worked in investigations, to myself and a group of three or four other officers, was set in the 1980 s prior to German unification:

> We had a guy here in [the area] who was a suspected child molester. At some point, they [the detectives] found a boy who said he had touched him. But the father of the boy was—they said he was—working for the Stasi. At that point, we never heard from the guy anymore, and I didn’t ask questions. I wasn’t going to ask questions, we never worked with them. (Reconstructed from field notes)

The story led into a larger discussion about pre-unification police work, but most relevant is the ambivalence portrayed in the presumption of violence, based on the assumed-to-be-understood reputation of the Stasi and the secrecy involved. The ensuing discussion was primarily centered on distancing “normal police work” from the stereotypes of East German secret policing, and this is reflected here, but at the same time without directly challenging the outcome or suggesting that it could have been challenged. The selection of the story and in particular its inclusion of a child molester as the ‘victim’ of the Stasi allows for a different narrative, as the conveyed meaning seems to be: the Stasi were an instrument of violent punishment, which is why you should not do something to invoke their wrath. Few personal or specific details were included in this story, though that was typical both of stories of a more ‘sensitive’ nature as well as of stories going back more than about ten years. Stories involving the Revierpolizei that presented violence in this way were essentially non-existent (and never ended with the disappearance of a suspect at the hands of the police) but other comments, particularly in relation to events reported in the media, were sometimes more supportive of the idea of ‘deserved violence.’ An obvious distinction here

seems to be the difference between local stories, in which the individual actors are often given some background, connection to the community, and context, and abstracted stories where the immediate situation takes precedent.

Though these examples stem primarily from policing narratives—some with dubious connections to real-life events—they suggest the broader processes of constructing a sense of community by creating stories to manage morality, normality, and risk. (Douglas 2013) Explanations of 'why bad things happen' can be moralistic, essentially blaming the victim and exhorting the community to learn from their example, or antagonistic, blaming either individuals within that society or an outside enemy for the disruption of society and normal or idealized routines. (cf. Ericson and Doyle 2003) Mary Douglas, invoking Durkheim, associates these general types as representative of differing forms of community (cultural) organization, but here the relationship of policing, institutionally, to the community is relevant, as well as the relationship of policing cultures—where these stories take place and matter, and where they are taken up variously as 'entertainment,' 'small talk,' 'news,' and 'knowledge'—to both the institution and to the community. The fact that the stories encountered often sought to avoid insider antagonism in terms of violence suggests a certain orientation of individual Revierpolizei officers towards their community which is admittedly unsurprising due to their community-oriented mandate. The officers, in their descriptions of violence and the police role, tended to avoid demonizing or problematizing the community in general and told more intricate, exculpatory stories involving individuals; however, this is not to say that only these types of stories were told, and there was no singularly consistent 'explanation' of violence, but rather dynamic responses and narrative / rhetorical uses of violence. The police both needed to be able to communicate around the topic of violence and also selectively attribute it individuals, communities, and abstracted social problems within various settings.

5.5.4 Community-Oriented Policing and Violence

The paradoxical relationship to violence and police work has been noted by scholars and generally attributed to the fact that police are often pre-occupied with *potential* violence while spending very little time actually experiencing it. (Cullen et al. 1985) The work of the Revierpolizei is specifically focused on interpersonal relationships, and any occurrence of violence—by or against the police—may be especially problematic here in how it is internalized: is it personal? Could it have been avoided? Has it 'corrupted' an existing or potential interpersonal relationship? (cf. Peters 2005) The self-image of the Revierpolizei

is often maintained or constructed through the use of ‘distancing,’ by comparing the type of work they do and how they do it to what other units or ‘normal’ police do—for example in the cases of the officers who went on patrol unarmed or the others who downplayed the effectiveness of using firearms in all but the most extreme and implausible cases. While the use of ‘war stories’ has been argued to remind police officers that police “always need to be the stronger side” (Behr 1993: 55, own translation) the mandate and the culture of the Revierpolizei emphasizes being clever rather than strong, reinforced among other venues through the telling of consequence of failure narratives. Officers described some cases in which attempting to be strong would only balance the situation against the officer and require an escalation of force; in at last one case this resulted in a “tactical withdraw” but was presented with the closing statement “that was early on, you need to learn to communicate better if you’re going to work alone… sometimes you can’t win if you do it that way.” The outbreak of violence is a stark reminder that Revierpolizei are also police, and the justifications or neutralizations to explain the significance of this violence push them in the direction of the theorized ‘universal police culture.’ (Behr 1993, Behr 2000) While the physical danger of policing was not a topic that came up often during my field stay (though also not never) it remains an ever-present component of the police occupational culture as I experienced it. Posters and flyers created by the two major German police unions, prominently displayed within every station visited, emphasized the risks of death and injury, essentially presenting police work as *the* dangerous job and a form of sacrificial service. (cf. Demaree 2017) Unlike many other jobs which may involve violence in some way—postal employees, bartenders, teachers etc.—police work offers narratives to not only explain this violence, but also ways to reinforce the values offered by the occupational culture, which are applicable even for officers—community-relations units, administrators, or in this case Revierpolizei—who do not necessarily see applying coercive physical force as a core aspect of their work. (Chan 1997, Reuss-Ianni 1983, Van Hulst 2013)

This is not to say that violence plays no role in the normal work of the Revierpolizei. Officers were tasked to carry out arrests—primarily in cases in which they had already been involved. However, several officers expressed distaste for actually going out to issue arrests, with one stating that, “we need people to like us here, so if I go out, I try not to be seen and let the others get the guy.” Not all officers expressed this view so directly, and it was unclear to me how common arrests were or how violent or physically coercive they were likely to become—the department did not allow me to accompany officers who were intending to

make arrests on that shift, but in a broader sense there seemed to be a separation between Revierpolizei work focused more on communicative skills and other forms of police work that internalized violence to a greater degree.[20]

Violence is deeply associated with policing in both mainstream culture as well as the theoretical literature on police and policing. This association is reflective of the nature of police work as well as the culture of policing, though it is often challenged by the realities of police encounters: what would it mean to describe the police as 'violent' when not every encounter is resolved with violence, or when violence is applied selectively, situationally, or within a specific institutional or organizational paradigm? Violence plays a significant symbolic role towards policing which—alongside the various other symbols and representations that make up 'the police' as a constitutive image—both strengthen and constrain the police in societal and community contexts. The image work of the police with regards to violence takes place at every level of the organization—in the present case especially at the level of individual interactions which tend to downplay the potential and relevance of physical force whenever possible, and in the crafting of individual and cultural narratives which provide meaning both to 'the police' and to the larger life-world.

[20] This is to some extent similar to how Revierpolizei officers were openly critical of attempts by the administration to use them for prisoner transport duties—they were aware of the benefits to them, as an entire shift could be used simply to drive a prisoner to a different facility and then return, but most saw this as a 'wasted shift' and not consistent with their mandate as community-oriented officers.

6 Community Tales: Storytelling, Experience, and Local Knowledge

6.1 Narrative and Storytelling as Action

"Two voices is the minimum for life."

– Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*

Police culture is often cited with regards to practical explorations of the police, in particular as a hindrance to effective reform. Yet the term itself very often seems to be haphazardly used without regard to understanding what a police or policing-specific culture would be beyond daily work routines. The relevance of police culture to police practice tends to focus on two connections: the police culture, in abstract, as a source of policing norms; and the realm of police storytelling and mythologizing. The first connections remain significant and will be discussed in the context of the police mandate and relationship with communities and institutions in the following chapter, but the second connection warrants deeper investigation, as examinations of storytelling and narrative presentation, especially within studies of policing and depictions in media and popular culture, tend to emphasize the content of the stories told but overlook the storytelling itself as *social action.* (cf. Burke 1989, Fletcher 1996, Waddington 1999, Cockcroft 2005, Van Hulst 2019)

Police officers often tell stories related specifically to their work—most specialized professions have their own forms of narrative, clichés, and moral lectures. (Becker et al. 1961, Crank 1994, Paoline 2013, Tangherlini 2000) Often the stories themselves are used as evidence to claim either for a fixed set of policing values, i.e. the use of stories involving potentially extra-legal violence to demonstrate that police officers value the use of violence against 'outsiders' or those

A. Bielejewski, *Holding down the Fort*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-39773-9_6

who disrespect them personally (cf. Westley 1970, Van Maanen 1974, Westmarland 2001), or to argue for their functional use within policing institutions, for example as ‘coping mechanisms.’ (Hunt 1985, Scrivner 1994, Chan 1997, Martin 1999) Without necessarily rejecting the idea that police values are reinforced or communicated through the use of stories or that the telling of stories may have some functional use within policing organizational culture, the case at hand serves as a reminder that storytelling is a complex social action establishing (often dynamic) relationships between storyteller and audience, presenting images of both self and other and establishing chains of events, *ideal types* and logical assumptions which may depend entirely on pre-existing shared or communicated understandings. Peter Manning has emphasized the ritualized aspects of police storytelling, suggesting essentially that while some stories might be functional or intended to convey specific or contextualized meaning, other stories are more-or-less told *just to be told*. (Manning 2012, cf. van Hulst 2013) Exploring the worlds of policing ethnographically means treating the use of stories as a form of interaction bound by its own—fixed or flexible, prescribed or negotiated—rules and forms and assuming that the story itself cannot be separated from its telling. (Fletcher 1996, Cockcroft 2005)

At the same time, storytelling often—arguably always—is a key practice within police work, in the sense that narratives need to be crafted as a way to define situations, ascribe roles and motives, and set or negotiate interactional goals. The way police talk and the specific rhetoric used may reflect the world-view of individual officers or the policing culture, but it is most interesting in how it shows the dramaturgical construction of shared meaning, embedding the audience into the story or inviting them as co-narrators: the uses of police discretion in particular often imply the need for officers to frame or legitimate their decision making power and the (institutional or situational) meaning of their actions, as well as which others participants are being included and what the story might mean to them. (Shon 1998) Police can define problems not only at a social level but at a way that puts pressure on others to alter or explain their behavior. As Loader (1997) notes, “the police’s entitlement and capacity to speak about the world is seldom challenged. They start from a winning position.” (3)

One extended passage (reconstructed from fieldnotes taken during observation) demonstrates the centrality and also ambiguity of narrative and storytelling to community-oriented police work:

> After lunch we plan to drive to Schloss [Musterstein] because a woman had reported being photographed by a neighbor without permission, but had been unable to make

> the Sprechstunden [consultation hours.] She had reported the case to the Polizeirevier, who then informed Officer Karsten, who made plans to visit her at the castle…
>
> We arrive at Schloss [Musterstein] and Officer Karsten points out 'tourists' and notes that the castle is primarily a museum. We enter the museum and go directly to the office, we speak to a younger man working on a computer, but the woman who reported the complaint is not here now. We pass through the main museum collection and Officer Karsten provides some background: they host an annual reception here including various 'community groups,' the mayor's office, and the police. The mayor is new but otherwise he knows "fast alle" [almost everyone], We soon meet and say hello to two women who Officer Karsten seems to know, and then the boss of the woman who reported the complaint. She says that she had considered calling because kids have been spray-painting graffiti, she claims she didn't see them personally but someone else did. Officer Karsten asks what was sprayed and (making a hand gesture) asks how big it is.
>
> [Later that afternoon, after returning to the Polizeirevier and talking to Officer Reiner…] Officer Karsten tells me that the woman from the museum who registered the complaint needs to give up her driver's license, but "it" will be investigated later, others are handling it now and "wir sollen warten." [we should wait.] He concludes, with: "oh aber sie kam mir langsam sympathisch vor. " [essentially: I was starting to like her.] It is unclear if the reported incident of the neighbor taking a photo is related. Officer Reiner asks "who is being looked for?" Officer Karsten gives him the name and then "case closed for now." He begins looking through the event calendar on the computer, indicates an "Over-30 Party" and says to me "that could be something for us" and laughs.

While relatively uneventful, this series of semi-related events shows how fractured and second-hand narratives are converted into useable or ignorable forms and how narrative framing can be used structurally as transitions, bookends, and justifications. The original reported case had little background information, but the reported action ("someone had taken a photograph without permission") led to it being obviously interpreted as a non-emergency, non-threatening case. The descriptions provided to me (almost as asides) contextualized the decision to visit the location beyond the originally stated reasoning of "the woman couldn't come to my office hours," suggesting it would be a useful opportunity to simply 'be present' in the community. This essentially proved to be the case, as the original complaint became less relevant and instead the focus became on minor small talk (insignificant enough in content to not even be recorded in the original field notes but still a form of police-community interaction) and then on a new spontaneously reported issue. The case of graffiti began, and essentially remained, a very simplistic narrative, "kids have sprayed graffiti." The use of the word 'kids' (*Kinder*) seemed to both work as 'actionable' information and as contextualization: this wasn't *serious* crime; it was simply kids. The term 'kids'

is non-specific, potentially referring to 17 or 18-year olds, but the choice of this word rather than 'juveniles' (*Jügendliche*) further downplays the seriousness—in English a similar distinction would be between 'kids' and 'teenagers.' As the woman hadn't seen the graffitists herself, it would be of course difficult to distinguish between an 'accurate' estimation of the offender's ages or potential 'risks' to the community and a simple use of preferred vocabulary: we are not aware of how the information was originally presented to her or in which context—the sparse narrative from the fieldnotes was essentially the entire conversation, which lacked an explanation of *who* had actually seen the kids. Officer Karsten's follow-up questions focused solely on the problem object, the graffiti, rather than the subject, the sprayers, and it was not immediately clear if his asking questions at all was related to actual personal or police interest or simply continuing and then resolving the interaction in an acceptable way. However, the unstated but obvious framing of the encounter—a resident and 'local manager' of a space and place presenting something likely to be soon as either 'criminal' or 'disorderly' in nature to a police officer presumably tasked with investigating and further reporting such things—sets the woman's description of the graffiti and the officer's response of "how big?" a simplified form of joint communicative action to agree on a shared reality. (cf. Clark 2006) While Officer Karsten is in no way committed to any kind of follow-up, his response was, if loosely, in line with the presentation, rather than rejecting the unstated or understated implications of the woman's claim; at the same time, his response did not appear to suggest a prioritizing of the issue or an earnest attempt to collect information, and the size of the graffiti appeared to me at least to be less crucial information than what was written or drawn. Whether the officer himself took to be a 'serious' issue or was simply going along with the flow of the interaction was unclear: the case never came up again during my field stay, at least. The relatively unceremonious ending of the case is standard in a great deal of police work—problems 'resolve themselves' or the responsibility is transferred to someone else—and while Revierpolizei officers often see a need to still follow up and stay in the loop, this isn't always possible or practical. In this case it didn't appear that Officer Karsten had actually met or knew the woman apart from a phone call—admittedly, I didn't think he would ever confess to not knowing someone in his jurisdiction—and so his ironic closure of the case with "I was starting to like her," is essentially a backstage performance, intended either for me, for Officer Reiner, or for both of us, for a situation where the frontstage is suddenly unavailable. The final comments of the section were essentially a transition into the idea of 'something new to do,' fitting to a broader narrative of 'showing the field researcher the variety of work' while also making a joke.

Storytelling as a collection of social practices fits more broadly into narrative sociology. Narrative sociology has, since its development as a major topic of interest, primarily focused on storytelling and personal narratives, but can include additional communicative forms such as a everyday conversations, formal reconstructions of events, chronicles or lists of events with less emphasis on storytelling elements, and the practices used to development shared narratives cooperatively or in conflict. (Presser 2016, cf. White 1980) Roland Barthes (2004) writes that, "narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is nor has been a people without narrative." (65) Narratives can tell us a great deal about how human action and experience is perceived by the narrator or within a specific frame. They "allocate causal responsibility for action, define actors and give them motivation, indicate the trajectory of past episodes and predict consequences of future choices, suggest courses of action, confer and withdraw legitimacy, and provide social approval by aligning events with normative culture codes." (Smith 2005: 18)

6.2 Values and Cultural Narrative

> "Less and less do we encounter people with the ability to tell a tale properly. More and more often there is embarrassment all around when the wish to hear a story is expressed. It is as if something that seemed inalienable to us, the securest among our possessions, were taken from us: the ability to exchange experiences."
>
> – Walter Benjamin, *The Storyteller* [Der Erzähler] (1936)

> "The experience! The experience! Haven't you learned?"
>
> Profane didn't have to think long. "No," he said, "offhand I'd have to say I haven't learned a goddamn thing."
>
> – Thomas Pynchon, *V.* (1963)

Narrative serves many roles, and is considered both to be an expression of values held as well as an important component in processing, adapting or testing out new or existing conceptual values. (Baumeister and Newman 1994, Berger 1997, Tangherlini 2000, Presser 2012, Maggio 2014) Within criminology, autobiographical accounts, the use of neutralizations, justifications, and excuses, and self-motivating rhetoric have all been seen as not only useful for understanding individuals engaged in crime or violent behavior, but also as key to that person establishing an identity that allows them to engage in that behavior. (cf. Hunt 1985, Maruna and Copes 2005, Presser and Sandberg 2015, Kurtz and

Upton 2017) Internalized narratives can provide the motivation for behavior; Presser (2012) states that, "people *talk themselves into* engaging in some behavior even as they talk *after* doing it." (9) Expressed narratives, even stories told to diverse audiences, can thus be both subjectively framed accounts of how events or actions were understood as well as invitations (and instructions) for *aligning actions* (Stokes and Hewitt 1976), practices and vocabularies for synchronizing accounts and establishing some level of shared meaning. (Schönbach 2010)

The analysis of narratives has often focused on formulaic stories: those that follow set patterns, whether told ritualistically (Malinowski 1922, Geertz 2010, Goody 2010) or through the filter of popular and news media culture. (Cawelti 1976, Gripsrud 2017) Even these examples—anthropological, linguistic and cultural studies explorations of the uses of storytelling—have tended to emphasize creativity and situatedness in how stories are told over deeper embedded meanings represented through plots. The plot itself, that is, what happens within the story that leads to a 'satisfying' conclusion, is of relevance in how stories represent generalized morality—i.e. are 'the good guys' destined to triumph? Is revenge presented as justified when employed by the hero? (cf. Cawelti 1975, 1976) But the specific elements used within the story—how things, people and places are presented and described in vivid, sparse, or no detail—tells us something not only about the structure or ritualized nature of the telling or the narrative as a representation of structural background as well as an individual but also about the presumed audience. (Ochs 2004, Maggio 2014) Narratives are not simply found in formally presented stories, but occur within dynamic interactions—even scripted and standardized formats ranging from theater to film and television are considered to be responding to and commenting on interpretations of society, social problems, and societal change: proverbially "holding the mirror up to society." At the same time, these representations are creatively, often intentionally, constructed and often the choice of images and presentations within a narrative can say more than the overall plot or specifically indicated connections between elements, such as consistently referring to management and business-oriented individuals as "suits" as a way to separate them from both the narrator and corresponding identity group and the presumed audience. (Bathurst and Monin 2010)

Narratives are constructed and, by necessity, often *minimally constructed*; that is, the elements included within the narrative serve some function in that narrative either to establish and further the plot or to provide additional indicators or details. (Ochs 2004, Colville et al. 2012) Hayden White (1980) notes that "every narrative, however seemingly 'full' is constructed on the basis of a set of events which *might have been included but were left out*… in which continuity rather

than discontinuity governs the articulation of the discourse." (14) For the purposes of analyzing narratives or setting them against a cultural framework, it is often precisely what is left out that is of greatest interest, as these elements are often simply assumed to understood by the audience based on the clues already provided. (Austin 1962) The social setting of the presentation can play a role as well, i.e. the level of embeddedness—to what extent the telling is part of a larger social encounter with back-and-forth communication or more formally a ritualized presentation (Drummond 2016)—or the use of co-narration, (Ochs 2004, Ochs et al. 1989) as the audience or other participants may at times ask questions about unclear elements, present plausible interpretations, or directly challenge the storyteller's account. Other times, however, 'missing' elements might form part of the narrative and its presentation itself, such as in the case of a story about mistaken identity or a mystery where the actual identity of a character is only revealed at the end, if at all. In most cases, however, narrative ambiguity will be minimized where possible to make the story broadly understandable to the immediate audience.

Narrative ambiguity is reduced by the establishing of common practices—reinforced by aligning actions—and the reliance on cultural narrative, existing *ideal type* connections between objects, actors and actions that most of the audience will be familiar with. These narratives, or the specific elements which constitute them, or the processes of giving them broader cultural meaning and resonance, have been discussed by scholars including Levi-Strauss (1963), who referred to *bricolage,* the 'building up' of social structure through narrative ordering[1], and Antonio Gramsci (1976) who described *sedimentation*, a process through which various images, stories, and elements of other types come together and form a broad 'common sense' view. (see also Berger and Luckmann 1967, Geertz 1975) Essential to both of these views is the idea that potential narratives—and potential concepts or objectifications to explain the deeper reality being observed or otherwise sensed—need not be accepted or rejected immediately upon their

[1] Compare Durkheim's (1995 | 1912) *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* which examines how the use of specific symbols creates essentially a triadic construction of the spiritual, the symbolic object ("totem") and society itself—the fact that the powers or characteristics attributed to various totemic animals or symbols can overtly seem to clash does not undermine this process but rather emphasizes the ritual nature of their presentation, in the same way that modern national cultures celebrate their warlike and peaceful natures often simultaneously. (Smith 2005, Fogarty 2019) The historical development of symbolic objects and images is of relevance, and in terms of European policing has been done the most justice by Liang (1992) as well as a growing literature examining the media presentation of crime and crime-fighting, but for the present study the theoretical focus remains on how these narratives are anticipated and selectively invoked tactically and tactfully.

(internal) conception, but rather can remain narratively—structurally—dormant until invoked in some capacity which tests their applicability and robustness. If an explanation of a phenomenon 'works' in a given situation it may not even be questioned what made it work (i.e. was it the authority or definition power of the invoker of the image, the similarity to already shared understandings, or a more basic 'herd effect' in which the story is accepted without needing to be understood?) If one asks, "why did that man steal?" and the response is, "Because he is a criminal" this answer may be accepted, despite its tautological nature. The availability of cultural narratives of crime and criminals makes the simplistic narrative "the criminal stole" tacitly and conditionally acceptable, but more complicated narratives, connections and images will be played out and challenged in more interesting ways: how is the criminal imagined to look or depicted so as to be recognizable as a criminal even prior to any mention of crime? Is the criminal permanently relegated to the villain role, or might the character instead be described as a 'rebel' or 'outlaw' with whom some audiences can draw sympathy? (cf. Katz 1988) The more stories that are told—especially those *widely* told, through mass media—about a type the more narrative connections become available even with conflicting logic: a police officer shooting a wounded suspect could be a heroic character willing to damn himself to protect those he cares about, or a violent killer. (cf. Klockars 1980) The present use of the term cultural narrative, as opposed to bricolage, sedimentation, or another term entirely, is simply to emphasize that 1) these narratives are essentially infinite and span from rough images or conceptualizations (e.g. the general image of a police officer in uniform) to iconic and specific patterns of images (e.g. a specific scene and piece of dialogue in which a suspect is asked if he feels lucky), 2) these narratives need to be made manifest through use to remain relevant and develop meaning—regardless of whether they are widely believed, represent the true state of the world or society, or reflect visible structural or power dynamics, and 3) individual or local emphasis of certain narratives over others reflect in in some way beliefs or expectations of order and normality, but when challenged or put up against conflicting narratives may be modified or negotiated to establish an intersubjective reality. (Burke 1969, Branaman 2016, cf. Levi-Strass 1963) In terms of police authority, this simply means that the police are aware that multiple stories can be told about them—or that they are performing a role which can have infinite interpretations—and attempting to ensure that the 'correct' story is followed, which means considering the audience and how various potential narratives are, with every action and moment, being highlighted or made unsuitable for the new dramatized reality.

While culture can refer to the beliefs, assumptions, and expectations of a social group (ranging from smaller 'subcultural' groupings to societies or society, as a singular concept) these cultural understandings are not fixed or unalterable, and can be observed to be challenged both in larger social movements as well as in interactional micro-processes; a useful way to understand these cultural elements is specifically as narratives which present *propositions for belief* that may essentially remain latent as understood concepts but only become manifest once they become necessary to provide meaning to a situation or action.[2] (Manning 1996) Gusfield analyzes how various understandings of not only alcohol consumption but the role of social life were challenged and changed not just to reflect changing social structures but as a reaction to perceived deeper changes to the meaning of those social structures (essentially seen as threats to the ability of White Anglo-Saxon Protestants to determine the moral compass of the US) and the use of differing alcohol narratives began to take on associations in terms of social status and class beyond the simple belief in a mechanistic process (i.e. that one drink will turn an upstanding Christian into an irredeemable alcoholic.) These mechanistic narratives are not always immediately linked to a deeper analytical level (e.g. many of these 'facts' were taught in schools or presented in literature by the Temperance Movement and could easily be taken at face value without the audience supporting the ontological hegemony of the Nativists.) However, the fact that multiple narratives can co-exist at the same time allows for the dramaturgical assumption that culture is that which is *lived* more so than that which is believed. (Austin 1962)

Narratives typically operate on a *normality principle* (Van Dijk 1975: 287) in which events and basic cause-and-effect connections are assumed to be normal and unsurprising in most contexts; the telling of a story, however, implies some level of unexpectedness in events that merits telling the story at all, and these unexpected elements will likely not only form the core of the story but be explained in greater detail or described in contrast to 'normal' events: everyday narratives often emphasize these *complications* (Van Dijk 1975: 289) with expressions such as, "and you wouldn't believe it, but…" or "and then, out of nowhere…" to emphasize that these actions are essentially violating the normality principle. These complications are breaks with normality, in which a continuous

[2] Colville et al. (2012) refer to the process of determining what story is being told, essentially the plot, as "simplexity" as it combines a more complex cognitive process with a more simple hermeneutics of action. The basic elements and actions will be interpretable in that connections between them can be found, but the burden may then be on the storyteller to establish stronger and clearer referents for the action to make the story one of communication rather than an interpretation of the abstract.

series of events which could be understood without overly specific detail (e.g. "I was shopping…") is interrupted by actions which alter the state of the initial situation and suggest that the narrative will continue until some form of resolution is introduced ("… when suddenly the power went out…") The reliance on cultural narratives can be found primarily in the un- or understated uses of 'normal' action but also in the emphasized use of breaking normality, in cases where larger connections or understandings are still assumed to be interpretable. In the previous example, 'going shopping' is a very basic cultural narrative which may not necessarily imply deeper normative connotations (as opposed to, for example, "I was out partying," "we were out looking for trouble," or "me and my partner were out on patrol" which provide some context in terms of social role, emotionality or values which the audience could read more into than simple action) in that it implies a series of continuous events which taken together make up a consistent unit of narrative action—only the injection of some complication breaks the action up. "Going shopping" in this context implies that the specific location, items being purchased, whether those items are still being looked for or are being carried in a shopping basket, etc. are not immediately relevant—but at the same time it implies some generic 'normal' sense of the phrase which specifically does not require any further clarification: the audience would not be expected to assume that the narrator was shopping for houses, cars, helicopters, or (in most cultural contexts, at least) firearms.

The institution of policing has depended on image work and public / community relations if nothing else for the fact that cultural images of policing have varied so drastically from the actual everyday work of policing and the most likely 'peeks' into the world of policing that 'outsiders' are likely to be afforded. The ability of individual officers to alter mainstream culturally-imprinted image of the police is minimal. Funke (1990), referring to police in Germany, writes that:

> Raids, attacks on protestors and "hunts for criminals"—because the majority of citizens primarily come into contact with these types of police action through information media...—imprint the image of the police more than their other tasks do… This image stems not only from spectacular and occasionally dramatic interventions of the police, but in the end because citizens who become the victim of criminal action or who fear becoming such want to see the police that way. (34, own translation)

The various images of police visible in the media and in everyday life—through observation and personal involvement—are in contest, and yet still can all exist. The relevance is which images can dominate and be invoked within given situations, and what happens when involved parties are essentially viewing different

images of the same object. The police are linked both through their institutional constraints but also through narratives and image with crime and violence, regardless of the day-to-day reality of the individual officer.

Cultural narrative is often presented in the form of enthymemes, "truncated syllogisms in which one of the premises is understood but unstated." (Gusfield 2000: 91, cf. Edmondson 1984) These can be found both in the detailed mechanisms of cause and effect—such as in describing a gun being drawn followed by someone being taken to the hospital or dying, without needing to explain the gun being fired, the chemical reaction that leads to the bullet being expelled, the physical effects of the bullet on the body, etc. The narrative of the Stasi in the case of a suspected child molester presented in the previous chapter is one example of an enthymeme: the narrator simply presented the involvement of the Stasi and then the disappearance of the man, but the audience was presumed (at least in this telling) to understanding the connection between these two events and not view the story as a mystery. Enthymemes are essentially the everyday or common sense elements of how understood can be understood, but understanding changes in these perceptions or understanding is complicated specifically by the fact that they are not openly stated and can be used in narratives where alternative understandings are, at least theoretically, possible: the specific narratives presented by Revierpolizei officers were often dependent on 'obvious' assumptions and connections which were not apparent or clear to me, particularly in the invocation of stereotypes which I didn't understand or recognize: for example, commenting on the relatively long driving times between destinations in once shift, said to me, "I guess this is normal for you," and only later in the discussion did I realize he was referring to the presumed greater distances between locations in the US when compared to Germany.

Enthymemes are also found in 'higher level' connections within stories, that where the overall plot and moral of the story are expressed; many narratives rely on symbols or stand-ins for characters, events, and connections that are not explained or explored within that narrative. That is, important elements for understanding a story are often found outside that story—as in parodies or homages which require a basic familiarity with the plot or major elements of the original story, such as the many uses of 'loose cannon' or maverick cops modeled on the *Dirty Harry* films which, rather than presenting that character as an 'interesting' reaction to changing conditions present it as a stereotypical form of police office. (cf. Bielejewski 2016) Cultural narratives are essential to personal everyday narratives, but are also important in popular culture or mass media, where many are first presented as models to a general audience. They are often used as idioms

or metaphors, sometimes ironically or subversively, such as how calling someone "Einstein" will rarely imply that they are of exactly average intelligence. (cf. Ewick and Silbey 1995, Gusfield 2000)

Cultural narratives here are essentially the starting point of everyday interpretations within the *hermeneutic circle.* (cf. Gadamer 1998) The basic idea of the hermeneutic circle is that a 'text,' here referring to any *interpretable* sign or identifiable communicative format, can only be given meaning by referring both to the entire text in its socio-cultural and historic context as well as to the individual sections and elements of the text in their immediate exigencies; these dual processes of interpretation are both sequential and simultaneous, and the ontological implications are that the process is never truly complete, in that a text can never be 'fully' understood in its entire meaning for society and all of its component elements, references, and residuals, but (in a more pragmatic sense) the text will likely at some point be imputed with enough 'useful' meaning to allow it to be categorized, summarized, or acted towards. (cf. Ricoeur 1984 for a similar interpretation of how the past can be narratively structured with meaning beyond that which is used to interpret the present.) It is not necessary for these narratives to be fully located within a socio-cultural realm, as the process of meaning-making, interpreting existing cultural assumptions, and fitting them to lived experienced is continuous and never-ending (cf. Bourdieu 1993) and, more importantly, the relevance to social action lies in how these interpretation are used, once again, as *starting points* for further meaning-making—even if there were such a thing as "false" narratives or unsuitable applications, they still be "correct" in some way if one actor were able to anticipate this or recognize this and modify their own behavior to 'update' the joint action. A simplistic example might be a tourist who doesn't speak the language being shouted at by an approaching police office: the words need not be linguistically interpreted, and the historical context and various political interpretations of the police *specific to local cultural frameworks* need not play a role, but the basic understanding that the one social actor is something similar to a pre-existing understanding of 'a police officer' and that the other is being approached and communicated to would likely be enough to make the most 'normal,' pragmatic and estimated least likely to result in further conflict or misunderstandings appear to be stopping and waiting as if the officer had asked the tourist to stop and wait. The police officer, in return, would likely recognize which of his gestures and communicative overtures are culturally common, or at least situationally interpretable (assuming the officer's intent is to convey meaning and not intimidate.) Not only are a great deal of social control functions essentially universal to most cultural perspective based on their diffusion and the adaptation of practices, but those used by formal control agencies (i.e. the police)

are often *intended* to aid in this hermeneutic understanding by being broadly and easily interpretable: as discussed in Chapter Three, this often resulted in police adapting an overt institutional role when in contact with ‘outsiders,’ specifically those who could not speak German, because the generalized institutional role presumes or requires less flexibility in interpretation than a situational or more relaxed posture.

The hermeneutic approach following Heidegger and Gadamer emphasizes pre-understanding and the assumption that social meanings cannot be effectively interpreted in a way that allows ‘being in the world’ without reference to prior understandings (cf. Reichertz 2007); Laverty (2004) explains this by stating that, “meaning is found as we are constructed by the world while at the same time we are constructing this world from our own background and experiences.” (24) The use of the term cultural narratives here refers to this large, varied and subjective realm of pre-existing interpretations which can serve as starting points or aids to interpreting situational meaning. Cultural narratives can include basic everyday symbolic associations, but at the broadest refer to ‘modern myths’ which:

> Symbolize complex events, as ways to understand social problems in personal terms. As such they redirect attention from structural and institutional aspects and support a theory of social behavior, and the politics related to it, that sees social policy as geared to remake the person. They make the world a more interesting place, a place where bad people are responsible for evil. (Gusfield 1989: 434)

Cultural narratives and (institutional) myths may not always guide action, but may serve a significant role in the intersubjective construction of meaning; the use of myths by the police—specifically within the context of violence as discussed in the previous chapter—can show how police attempt to frame specific individuals, classes of actors, or ideal type constructions as sympathetic or hostile. In some cases, this narrative framing on its own may be a strong enough action to be considered a form of boundary maintenance. (cf. Goffman 1981) Groups or individuals with identities that have been effectively established as a cultural image in a way that leads to stigmatization or further loss of status, for example certain types of drug users, may seek ways to narratively redefine themselves or separate themselves from broader stereotypes. (Copes 2016) Police officers are common cultural and mediatized characters who can be fit into a variety of different narratives and settings using various and contradictory trope and stereotypes, but unlike many other similar ‘quilt of community life’ characters who can represent fixed social roles and jobs in differential manners (construction workers, priests,

doctors) the police also frequently represent a higher level construct of social control, unequal power, authority, and force. (cf. Wilson 2000, Reiner and O'Connor 2015) Individual police officers often act to subvert or distance themselves from various broader narratives, i.e. through the appeal to situational authority within interactions through various practices such as the use of everyday informal language, discussing personal interests or identity (discussing a preferred football team, etc.), or humor. At other times police will actively identify with broad cultural images as a symbol of a specific concept or orientation or a generalized depiction of value, such as the celebration of 'maverick' images of policing as part of a 'backstage' police culture (Fassin 2013) or the modern trend among US police officers to adapt the imagery of the vigilante comic book character *The Punisher.* (Riesman 2017)

Narratives of social problems, or of behavior or behavioral patterns that can be / have been problematized, could be expected to differ between policing life worlds and different elements of the community in which policing takes place. This divergence, however, is expected to be the strongest in the most formal, institutionalized situations, this in which individual responsibility and agency is restrained or defined out of existence; situations in which the authority of the police is more situational or based on personal relationships, that is, the closer the police officer is to what is actually going on, are presumed to allow for a greater bridging of the myths and cultural explanations between police and community. It should be kept in mind that cultural narratives, like social roles or identities, are also not unchanging fixed concepts but rather are *claims*—propositions for belief—that can be presented, negotiated, modified, and accepted or rejected. A police officer responding to a call might be convinced by the account presented by the purported offender and decide to use his or her discretion to overlook the incident, only to have some minor utterance or symbol re-contextualize the event and result in the officer resorting to a familiar institutional role. A police officer responding to a disturbance might be assuaged by the individual reporting that it was simply an "episode" or having a family member confirm that the individual is in therapy and that outbursts or altercations are rare. Differing cultural narratives can be found here in between vocabularies of motive: is the individual "crazy" or "mentally disturbed"? Both formulations were used in different situations within the Revierpolizei in differing contexts—for example, the man described in Chapter Four who attacked a police officer was "crazy" ("verrückt"), a word with everyday uses in terms of labeling deviance or establishing boundaries but not *necessarily* defining a social problem or pathology. Other individuals, particularly in cases of known individuals reporting by strangers (to the individual and the police) for 'acting strange' were described as "mentally

ill" ("geistlich krank") suggesting either the need to involve additional referral agencies or invoking a narrative of understanding, attempting to anchor an image of the person as "troubled" rather than a "troublemaker." A typical negative descriptor is "asozial," a generalized characterization which can imply a plethora of negative attributes and characterizations without making any specific claims about 'causes' or 'pathology.' (Funke 1990) In several instances different officers made statements about specific individuals 'with migration backgrounds' claiming, "he's not a fundamentalist [or "Salafist"] but think he has a socialization problem." These statements removed the ascription of an individual from a field that might require a more technical, serious, or institutional re-contextualization (as fundamentalism would then imply terrorism and be well out of the scope of most Revierpolizei work) whereas 'socialization' is a more general concept which can have both macro / structural dimensions (properly outside the scope of most if not all police work) and micro / interactional dimensions, which would be (and often were) reflected in officers approaching maintaining formal posturing and matter-of-fact communication when encountering these individuals. Similar patterns were found in many other cases, in which more 'definitive' problems or labels were indicated but essentially waved away to be replaced with a more general labeling with more relevance for everyday interaction then for official documentation: "he's not exactly a Nazi, but he gets aggressive sometimes," "

One single narrative will rarely dominate a concept, situation, or form of action, but instead they form an array or set of narratives which can be compared or combined; narratives themselves may undergo change over time as they are presented and depicted in different ways or with reference to different related or conflicting understandings, with some essentially falling out of the 'collective consciousness,' and others developing or being refined based on more frequent or visible use or their application to identified changes in society. (cf. Burke 1966, 1969, see also Bourdieu 1991) The use of cultural narratives related to 'moral panic' in the 1980s tended to emphasize danger to children and the risk of strangers or 'seemingly normal' neighbors who might be serial killers (Best 1993, Jenkins 1994), and while these images are still visible and these narratives can be found, their public visibility has been reduced to some extent and replaced with images, clichés and stereotypes related instead to terrorism, mass shootings, and politically or racially motivated violence. (Altheide 2009, cf. Best 1999, see also Garland 2008 for an argument for how these changing narratives are framed by societal power dynamics.) Similar to how the concept of moral panic has sometimes been interpreted (Best 1999) it is here irrelevant to what extent these cultural narratives are 'true' or based in reality or even truly believed to be realistic: the relevance here lies in the fact that they can be used as a basis both

for interpreting current and future situations as well as for establishing intersubjective communication; conflicting cultural narratives will only need to be reconciled when both are simultaneously invoked but cannot both fit to the same proffered interpretation or outcome. For example, similar images of fear or insecurity related to the Post-9/11 US were used in parodies and comedies (ranging from the TV show *Arrested Development* to the over-the-top *Team America: World Police*) in which the target audience was (most likely) not intended to interpret those symbols (caricatures of 'terrorists' and heroic, zealous government agents with little restraint or oversight) as 'realistic' but rather as comically representing the cultural narratives taken seriously by others: communicating with narratives and related symbols does not imply a belief in those symbols, but simply the availability of a relevant communicative frame. This can often be seen in the use of policing stereotypes in police humor, or more general in the selective and subversive use of East German stereotypes by East Germans: officers were familiar with Rainald Grebe's parody anthem *Brandenburg*, and at one point began an impromptu sing-along, including the (translated) lyrics:

> There are states where something's happening
>
> There are states were something's really happening, and there's
>
> Brandenburg…
>
> In Brandenburg, once again someone crashed into a tree
>
> What can you do when you're 17, 18 in Brandenburg?

Cultural narratives are often presented and referred to through popular culture, mass media, folklore and so on, but in this understanding they are not limited to those formats, and are could essentially refer to any form of pre-existing understanding that fits in some way to a understanding that links process to structure, that is, how the world is believed to work, with the presumption that even these elements are built on additional larger scale narratives. As David Garland (2001) notes, "without a grounded, routine, collective experience of crime, it is unlikely that crime news and drama would attract such large audiences or sell so much advertising space." (158) Policing fits in the same way, in that, for most people, 'routine' experience is limited to de-contextualized outsider observations (seeing a police car passing by, seeing a blocked off car accident) and a significant media saturation of wildly divergent but institutionally bounded depictions: police can be good or bad, effective or incompetent, but are almost exclusively portrayed within the broad realm of policing, law enforcement, justice, public order, and

crime, which makes them still recognizable as police. For example, cultural narratives about police training are often shown in comedic form in US popular culture (and rarely shown in serious, dramatic form), where police training is widely (though not necessarily inaccurately) seen to be underemphasized and consisting of relatively low academic standards. (Chappell 2008) The use of these narratives depends on an existing understanding not only of what it is police do and should do but also basic understanding of what *education* and *training* even mean, allowing for a conceptual division between, for example, classroom training and on-the-job experiential training under the supervision of a field training officer or mentor. An audience, observing a reference to police training, might at first be unsure or ambivalent about whether this best refers to knowledge and professionalism or, as previously suggested, a lack of either, but which generalized narrative is seen as the 'best fit' will have more to do with which best provides meaning to the ongoing storyline than to which interpretation of training the individual audience member believes to be more correct.[3] Peter Manning (1996) describes how cultural images are selected from an array of existing images based on assumptions of what the intended audience will interpret 'correctly':

> The images represent a sample from a population of known images. An image must be seen as both sampled properly and as a proper sample of core elements that constitute the scene. For example, a "police stop" should contain core elements seen as typical of such an idealized stereotypical police scene. It should resemble others of this common-sense set or type in the viewer's experience. On the other hand, editors, film producers, and commercial makers may be wholly ignorant of viewers' tastes or what resonates with viewers. Although inaccurate, they believe that can imagine the viewer's memories, tastes and associations and, more importantly, they think they can effectively manipulate those factors. (268–269)

Even if the images—and resulting narrative—are selected or created based on 'incorrect assumptions' it can be presumed that in most cases the general representation which is intended can be understood by the audience; for example, the 'mistakes' or inaccuracies in presentations of policing is a common topic of discussion for both police officers and students of criminal justice, but both groups still seem able to enjoy TV shows about police or crime, and certainly are able to recognize policing characters and policing actions even when they

[3] In the same way, recognizing that the setting and scenery of "New York" in a film is actually Vancouver will never cause someone to believe that the characters are hopelessly lost, and while locals may comment and laugh about the confused geography when Central Park seems to be twenty feet from Greenwich Village, this will never on its own cause confusion about what is happening within the narrative of the film.

differ significantly from what would be 'normal' to a real-life officer: this is an essential function of *suspension of disbelief,* which allows one to interpret symbols and images through their use within a narrative and not strictly based on their fit to a true experiential-derived ideal. Understandings of cultural narratives and their meaning within a specific context are not simple reflections of identifying images from other cultural contexts, but is also a process of challenging, modifying, or calling into question those images, whether they come in the form of personal anecdotes, urban legends or folklore, dramatic plot-driven stories in film or television, or news media accounts.

The overlap between popular culture narrative and everyday personal narratives is complex and often blurry (see also Fassin 2014 for an exploration of ethnography and fiction), but anecdotal evidence has emphasized the relevance they exhibit when individuals engage in social worlds or institutions which they have previously only encountered through fictionalized portrayals: within criminal justice the "CSI effect" is often brought up as an example, in which jurors are underwhelmed by evidence in criminal trials which would previously be considered 'normal,' as their expectations of overwhelming evidence have been shaded by the highly stylized and over-the-top use of scientific-looking forensic science methods in TV shows including the CSI franchise. (Cole and Diosa-Villa 2009)[4] As cultural narratives are presumed to be essentially infinite in light of the countless varieties, subversions, and retellings, it should be assumed that most cultural narratives would *not* take precedence in how situations are immediately understood—for this reason cultural narratives often require 'anchoring' to explain to the audience what kind of story is being told and which of all possible narratives are the most likely to fit to the story being told.[5]

[4] In terms of crime specifically, a great deal of criminological and communications literature has attempted to link the consumption of media (television news and reality TV shows in particular) with what David Garland calls the "collective cultural experience of crime." (2001: 147) As this work is generally positivist and focused on determining causal effects, it is not considered relevant to the present work, apart from the concept that the *vocabularies* used to discuss crime, deviance, and criminal justice issues are certainly more likely to be derived from mass media sources than from personal experience, and that individual incidents—whether viewed in the cinema, on television news, or personally experienced—can become ideal types which then stand-in for and represent a larger phenomenon of possible (or even common) human behaviors. (cf. Doyle 2006) An example of this can be found in Ted Bundy, who, following his trial, escape, and re-capture, came to represent the 'modern' model of a typical serial killer, despite the fact that it was specifically his incongruence with the previous ideal type that made him more newsworthy than other known killers of the time. (Jenkins 1994)

[5] Manning (1996) suggests that some media driven narratives are dominant enough to essentially be representatives of societal consensus, referring to "the hegemony of these images

Cultural narratives are not necessarily dominant or exclusive, and often can be found in direct conflict or contradictory forms even when presented together, such as in the case of redemption stories, in which a flawed character becomes a heroic figure by overcoming adversity and possible self-sacrifice, which may also overlap with other narratives about 'warning signs,' certain types of behavior, such as violence, substance abuse, or compulsive lying, which are often used to suggest that a character is likely to engage in other negatively-portrayed actions, shouldn't be trusted, or is unlikely to find redemption. Cultural narratives can include broad narratives which suggest the entirety of the plot, such as the 'star-crossed lovers' element in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet and its countless repetition both in direct homages or parodies (such as often found in classic children's cartoons) or in more modern retellings such as West Side Story. The use of this type of narrative, which is essentially taken as a durable pre-existing frame to which newer elements can be fitted to their precursors, means that the eventual outcome of the story will likely not be a surprise, but the art, so to speak, is in the telling. Other uses of cultural narratives focus more on applying specific elements without adapting an entire plot from beginning to end: the star-crossed lovers may also be included in a story that doesn't end in their deaths, or that continues after it. For example, the 1997 film *Titanic* invokes most of the typical narrative elements of a 'Romeo and Juliet' type story, but with only of the pair dying, and the overall story is in no way a simple retelling; yet the fact that the characters are viewed as being held apart by society's expectations and class differences is presumably part of what makes the audience see their developing relationship as authentic, whereas the characters who express the (normal, in the world of the film) view that their relationship is unacceptable are certainly intended to be 'bad' characters for whom the audience has little sympathy.

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and their seductive, coercive power." (265) The interest of the present study is primarily in the images that are not hegemonic and which can easily be replaced, supplemented, or modified. For example, rather than a singular, still image of "the police," an individual might have an image of an authoritative, authoritarian no-nonsense highway patrol officer demonstrating his power and eventually offering a speeding ticket, which might be situationally supplanted when that officer, in reality, cracks jokes, points out a broken taillight but lets the driver go without even mentioning any fines or sanctions. The Durkheimian example of consensus-defining images may be relevant to examining changes in perceptions of policing over longer periods of time and in various media depictions, and previous examinations of policing in media (Bielejewski 2016) have referred to "dominant" images, but the assumption was that these image referred either to the police as abstract collective, to individual stock characters, or to very simplistic and broad roles, and less so to specific forms of practices in real-life face-to-face interaction.

'Buddy cop' films tend to the rely on the premise that two police officers with different backgrounds and contrasting working styles and personalities can learn from each other, overcome their initial distrust, and use their newly developed complementary skillset to catch (or kill) the antagonist; the basis of the plot development is centered around the audience understanding the two different styles or philosophies which the characters represent, by-the-book cop versus loose cannon, streetwise cop versus scientist cop, etc.; the cultural narratives used in establishing this premise has become so recognizable and cliché that most modern examples move in the direction of self-reference or parody. (cf. Wilson 2000, Bielejewski 2016) As specific film / TV tropes, the elements of 'buddy cop' movies are not expected to be translatable to everyday life or actual police work, but simply reflect the narrative and plotting practices used in telling stories involving police: most of the attributes of the character are already included in different versions of the basic role, and only minimal icons and framing are necessary to show the audience—who are expecting easily interpretable characters—what kind of cop they are watching.

Cultural narratives in fiction often serve not just to identify characters' attributes, but often to set the 'moral tone' of the character, i.e. to tell the audience who is the hero and who is the villain. Many of the typical narrative practices used for this purpose have become cliché and are today resigned primarily to parody (e.g. *Police Academy* [1984] lampooning the 'rescuing a cat from a tree' trope by having Officer Tackleberry shoot the cat out of the tree) but some version can be found in most fictional narratives, usually unrelated or only indirectly related to the major plot. These types of constructions of characters based on actions have often been explored in terms of social construction and media analysis (Bielejewski 2016), but of more relevance to the case at hand is the use of value signifiers in everyday narratives; the types of descriptions and framing of actions to (attempt to) make clear to the audience that a specific character is 'good,' bad,' 'noble,' 'cowardly' and so on. (cf. Wagner et al. 2009)

6.3 Time and Narrative Action

> "How did it get so late so soon? It's night before it's afternoon. December is here before it's June. My goodness how the time has flewn. How did it get so late so soon?"
>
> – Dr. Seuss, *How Did It Get So Late So Soon*

A narrative presentation is not just an action, but at the same time it presents its own conceptual forms of action. All narratives propose a temporal sequencing. (Ricoeur 1984) The ordering of events, even stripped of any descriptions of causality or correlation, suggests connections which will be filled in by imagined action. The fact that, as in lived experience, not all elements of a narrative are brought to attention, highlighted, or made visible at all means that crucial elements to understanding how a narrative 'works' can be found both in what is specifically emphasized as well as in what is left unsaid, either leaving the audience free to fill in the details or with the assumption that they will already share the narrator's understanding: this is the essence of Weber's ideal type. (Weber 1958)

Narratives highlight violations of norms or expectations as the 'interesting' part of the story, but by using existing forms they can maintain an emphasis on action over description as necessary. As narratives are (re)tellings of events with a causal sequence—not necessarily told chronologically—the tension and conflict within the stories is generally centered around what will happen, which outcomes follow—and are therefore likely to be interpreted as being caused by—which acts. (Van Dijk 1975, Barthes 2004) This tension is often established with a break from normality, by having a character take an action or something to occur which is not necessarily fully interpretable on its own, either by situationally establishing a dissonance between states and/or actions, (e.g. "I was hungry but I had no money for food.") or by describing actions with variable, difficult to predict, or unknowable outcomes ("The guy pulled a gun on me.") Ending the narrative at either of these points would leave the story essentially plotless, lacking additional knowledge—this tension could be resolved not only by concluding the story, but also by prefacing it, for example, "I only stole something from the supermarket once" or "let me tell you about the time I *almost* got shot…" Either way, the introduction of a break from normality can be *curated*, fit within forms or formats, genres or tropes, to establish the type of story and to what extent the audience should have an idea or expectation of how it can be interpreted. For example, the tradition of American ghost stories often follows consistent forms, avoiding comparisons to existing popular culture images and instead emphasizing breaks with normal expectations of cause-and-effect, along the lines of "the door slammed shut, but no one was in the room," tending to remove otherwise 'logical' explanations rather than simply posit the supernatural as the most obvious explanation. (cf. Waskul and Waskul 2016) The audience will likely understand—apart from the setting and context of the story—what is being insinuated, in the fact that action is being presented that could not occur

without a human actor, and yet (within the narrative) certainly occurred. The concept of ghosts and hauntings serves here as a specific cultural narrative; that is what allows the genre of ghost stories to be told in the way they are as well as to be depicted on film and television. Additionally, these stories often center on an element of doubt or *hedging* (Stokes and Hewitt 1976, Potter 1996), e.g. with the storyteller prefacing the story by claiming to have never previously believed in ghosts, which essentially challenges the audience to infer an alternative explanation. This narrative device is also often found in crime and deviance stories, e.g. "I don't know if that guy was on drugs, but something was up with him." (cf. Jenkins 1994b, Revier 2017) As described earlier while discussing narratives of social problems, this practice was often used by Revierpolizei officer to present something as problematic within a situation but while avoiding larger or overt 'clinical' labels while still invoking the idea that structural factors could be—in this case or others—playing a role: "I don't really think he was an alcoholic, but this time he was so drunk that he couldn't even understand that he was talking to a police officer."

The *genre* of a narrative further guides the assumptions and expectations the audience are most likely to have of the unfolding narrative: the story is framed in a way that need not make it predictable but that can manage expectations enough to make it broadly interpretable. For example, a slightly different framing story could transform a ghost story into a crime story, in which the assumption of the supernatural is replaced with the assumption of a burglar (or worse.) In ghost stories, the use of phrases such as "I never believed in ghosts, but…" not only serve as a form of narrative credibility, but more importantly work as *genre anchors* which establish the plausible bounds of the current narrative format. Anchors support or cement understandings of how the genre could be interpreted, and could include elements such as the use of laugh tracks in television sit-coms or even laughter by the storyteller, the use of humor in otherwise 'serious' situations to undercut the seriousness (e.g. a character losing a limb in a swordfight and then declaring "it's only a flesh wound!") or conversely the emphasis on 'menacing' imagery in thrillers or 'gritty dramas' to maintain a sense of tension even before any danger, risk or violence has appeared (for example, the depiction of a badly burned teddy bear floating in water in the opening title scenes of *Breaking Bad,* which first occurs long before the object appears in the storyline.) The type of ghosts stories described by Waskul and Waskul (2016) have a basis in folklore and urban legends, and while the narrator will often attempt to make them shocking or scary, often the major narrative concern is to make them credible or realistic to some degree; as the narrator or protagonist in the story essentially pleads ignorance of what is really happening, the audience is intended

to quickly catch on to the obvious answer: ghosts; in other ‘modern classic’ genre narratives, the presumed answer could alternatively be aliens or the government. Other uses of genre anchorages, both in TV and film as well as in everyday narratives, are to identify a story as comedic, problem-defining / tragic, or illustrative / informative. Different forms of narrative practices are used depending on the format, but most are easily recognizable, ranging from simple things such as the title or style of the text in movies to the use of phrases such as “I saw the craziest thing yesterday!” Establishing the genre of a narrative allows for a different set of cultural narratives to become more prominently available while excluding others, or at least setting them aside until specifically invoked. The depiction of police officers in comedy (such as TV shows *Reno 911* or *Brooklyn 99*) almost always show police doing illegal, dangerous and implausible things that if taken seriously would make them villains or the overall story harshly critical of policing. Occurring within comedy shows, however, these actions are not intended to be taken as representative of actual police work, but rather the story plays with expectations and stereotypes either specifically to make comments about the irony of some of those elements (almost every sit-com featuring a police character includes a scene in which a family member is in trouble with the law, and the role strain between being a police officer and a family member is depicted in some way) or simply to advance other narratives without specifically focusing the story on policing issues, such as in countless plotlines where a police officer character learns to trust him/herself or overcome some personal obstacle, in the end single-handedly capturing a major criminal or personally leading a raid on a mafia hideout, often making jokes to other officers or directly to the ‘bad guys’ while doing so—the actual dangers are downplayed here and the audience is not expected to feel tension because of the comic setting. The long history of policing narratives in popular cultures means that police work can be fit into multiple genres each with a variety of unique and shared cultural narratives; just in the way that police often talk about policing in ways that have direct little relation to what they do (Waddington 1999) there is no reason to believe that every ‘interpretable’ image of policing in media or everyday narratives is directly related to a sincere belief about what police is or the what police routinely do. The concept of genre anchors, however, is applicable to everyday policing situations, as the diversity of policing cultural narratives can mean that citizens may need additional context to understand the situation they find themselves in when encountering the police; a division between, for example, comedy and tragedy can often be found simply in the practices and phrasings officers use to explain *why* some behavior is dangerous or unacceptable, or why a specific decision (i.e. giving a fine rather than letting someone off with a warning) is being taken. Policing stories

could be at the same time funny and frightening, and the use of genres frames not just how the audience should interpret this story in terms of following the plot or expectations, but also what type of lessons could be learned, essentially emphasizing *why* the story is being told: to amuse, to educate, to establish facts, or some combination of these goals and more.

Emphasizing a break with normality does introduce a form of narrative tension and communicates to the audience that 'something is happening (in the story) that will need to be explained' but this does not necessarily mean that nothing is explained at this point in the narrative; cultural narratives work as models of potential explanation that can be presumed or assumed (by the audience) as potential resolutions to this narrative tension, even if they are not confirmed or 'anchored' by the storyteller until later in the narrative. For example, characters may be introduced into the narrative and described, either directly and specifically or through the use of described actions or history, as 'strange,' 'abnormal,' 'deviant,' or 'unpredictable.' This may give the audience reason to distrust this character or suspect them of deception, etc., even though the protagonist or other characters in the story may lack a 'legitimate' reason to think this way within the context of the narrative. Various *stock characters* or ideal type images based on extant cultural narratives may fill this role[6], whether it be drug addiction, mental illness or concepts of 'craziness,' or basic concepts of personality and psychopathology. If this character is later revealed to, in fact, be duplicitous or a villain within the context of the story, the audience may feel justified in their previous assumptions: at a basic level the cultural narrative reinforces itself, in that it was assumed to exist—likely necessary for the narrative to be broadly interpretable—and is then confirmed, rewarding the audience for being clever enough to predict 'unexpected' events and outcomes. This establishes a form of credibility by both having the narrative unusual enough to be worth telling while adhering closely enough to established bounds of interpretability to avoid becoming so unusual that it cannot be followed up on or applied in any way.

[6] One common everyday example which was also observed in police storytelling is the use of "crazy eyes" as an evaluation of personal competence, sanity, deviance, aggression, or poor self-control. People often use phrases such as "you can see it in his eyes" as evidence of negative attributes in describing others, and once additional negative attributes are described it is essentially retroactively confirming this assessment. (cf. Manske and Osler 2007) More recently, in a 2019 Fox News interview, the proposed head of the US Immigration and Customs enforcement stated in relation to underage detainees, "I've looked at their eyes… and I've said that is a soon-to-be MS-13 gang member. It's unequivocal." (Hesson 2019) Reichertz (1990) discusses at length some of the practices and implications of police typification in the context of detectives in Germany which overlap with these types of 'gut level' judgements. See also Watson 1983.

(cf. Labov 1982, Ochs 2004) Other prominent examples could include underdog stories, in which a character specifically described as weak, powerless, or undervalued is able to accomplish something great or at least unexpected; this contrast alone can make the story into something seen as worth telling, and the 'entertainment value' of the story is likely increased by emphasizing the weakness of the character.[7]

6.3.1 Breaking from the Norm and the Tellability of Narratives

> "The trouble with writing fiction is that it has to make sense, whereas real life doesn't."
>
> – Iain M. Banks, The Guardian, "Iain Banks: The Final Interview" June 14, 2013

Breaks with normality within narratives are invitations to explain the break: as actions are primarily narratively constructed to be intentional or motivated (Van Dijk 1975, cf. Sandberg 2010) these breaks often speak to questions of the character; breaks with normality can be explained either by suggesting that the context was incomplete or misunderstood (e.g. the action was not actual abnormal or deviant, it was simply seen in the wrong light) or that the character incorporates some characteristic which can explain the action: the deviant action is simply the result of a deviant actor, with the causal mechanism implicit but unexplored. (cf. Becker 1963, Schur 1969) The use of narrative as a social action—storytelling and cultural production—here overlaps with the sociological explanation

[7] Police personal narratives—both those collected in Brandenburg and those from prior work in the US—often emphasized the uncertainty that police felt in difficult situations such as being confronted by an armed or unstable suspect or where quick decisions need to be made. This emphasis on uncertainty only appeared in cases where the officer—narratively often "by luck"—successfully resolved the situation, essentially establishing an underdog story: a narrative in which a police officer felt unsure or overwhelmed and then made a mistake would be less fitting and less appropriate in most contexts, and would likely be told very differently. Very few of these stories were encountered in the field, and most often in a "teaching" function, to express that risks are not only external but can also result from one's own unpreparedness: one example could be found in a story presented by an American police officer teaching at a university who described how on his first day on the job his service weapon was taken from his holster by several teenagers who surrounded him and then refused to return it until he "begged." This story could function as a comedic story but also as a form of reality shock story to teach officers just how quickly unexpected things can happen.

of dramaturgy and face-to-face interaction, where narratives are required in certain interactions to account for behaviors that may violate social norms (Scott and Lyman 1968) or that can be used to justify actions that may still be deemed unacceptable when performed by others. (Maruna and Copes 2005) Narrative structure pays a role in negotiating the definition of the situation by allowing, restricting or disallowing certain forms, controlling who is allowed to play which roles, and whether action can effectively be presented or normal or if it needs to be specifically justified, reformulated, or present a challenge to the norm. (cf. Van Maanen 1978a)

Analysis of narrative structure has often considered speech acts or statements to be narratives *per se* only when they fulfill this criteria of establishing a break with normality, often but not necessarily accompanied by elements such as introductory exposition providing a setting, background and context: Van Dijk (1975) specifically makes a distinction between the kind of narrative one might share of a dangerous or violent encounter and a police report in which specific details are more central than emotionality, tension or suspense. Leaving aside the question of whether official reports would be considered narratives in the sense intended here, police descriptions of events—either as 'canteen' stories or in describing the events to encountered individuals in the process of formally defining them certainly are. A significant difference is that the break with normality found here is often implicit; the deviance or unexpected behavior is often routinized and rarely as unexpected, tense, or suspenseful as it might otherwise be, as crime (and stories of crime) firmly fit within the habitus of policing. (Fletcher 1996, Chan 2004, Van Hulst 2019) Police are considered assessors of deviance within society (Sacks 1972), and the identification of something that police consider deviant is not inherently unique or a break from routine. As Van Hulst (2013) notes, "after a while, police officers find what might be considered unusual for the average citizen not worth telling a story about to one's fellow officers," but also that "if police officers were to only talk if they had experienced something out of the ordinary, it would be awfully quiet at the police station and in the patrol cars." (637–638)

The correlates of *tellability* in policing stories are unique to that institutional culture. Behr (1993) writes that, "in the professional lives of police officers there were (and are), alongside daily routines and repetitions, events that bear such distinguishing experiential qualities that they become firmly anchored in the memories of the officers." (50) Making these experiences recountable as policing narratives requires an emphasis on those experiential qualities which fit in some way to pre-configured policing values or perspectives but not in a way that makes them simply routine. The 'interesting' elements of narratives which are

told within policing occupational cultures are not so much that *someone did something wrong*, but rather specifically *who* did something (either individually, “the Smith kid,” or as an a stand-in for a broader identity, “some punk kid covered in tattoos,”) what it might represent (e.g. establishing something as part of a pattern or growing trend), or some other incongruity between how things appear and how they were experienced, for example in comedic or shocking stories which often reveal assumed social norms or values by challenging them or describing them being broken in some way; policing stories often reveal expectations of *expected* normality by showing how these do not apply to police officers, who should be (rhetorically) expecting the unexpected.[8] (cf. McNulty 1994, Ford 2003, Conti 2009)

In policing narratives, especially, the breaking of norms is not ultimately presented as the core conflict or question to be resolved; more relevant are questions of how social norms are applied, to whom, in which circumstances, and how the violation is interpreted more broadly both by other characters within the narrative and at the ‘meta’ level by the audience. (cf. Van Hulst 2019) From either a narrative or interactionist perspective, social norms are not seen as inviolable—their violation is the very basis of a great deal of social interaction—but social practices and forms are developed and negotiated specifically to manage whether these norms have actually been broken, what that means, and how it can or should be responded to; one way of examining these practices is by focusing on the use of motive and how it is used narratively to frame social action.

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[8] Van Hulst (2013, 2019), however, emphasize that many policing stories are mundane and lacking in particularly interesting ‘twists,’ and are not necessarily picked up as topics of additional conversation. In light of the fact that police often experience a great deal of downtime, and that therefore many stories are told simply to be told, it should be considered that not every stories are carefully crafted moral plays: many are simply accounts of things that happened, and while it is possible that some deeper meanings could be read into some elements of these narratives, it must be accepted that very often these stories are simply little more than ‘making conversation.’ The border between stories ‘worth evaluating’ and those that have little to tell is theoretically unclear but practically interpretable to most likely audiences (including field researchers.) Van Hulst (2013: 634) gives the example of a police officer breaking the silence in a breakroom to announce to a fellow officer, “yesterday we also had a sheep,” which was apparently met by continued silence. According to Van Hulst, “this can be understood as a set of events that was offered as a possible story but rejected as not tellable enough,” yet the rejection was only possible once the story had at least been introduced; the practices of storytelling and audience participation remain relevant.

6.4 Vocabularies of Motive

> "The mind commands the body and is instantly obeyed. The mind commands itself and meets resistance."
>
> – St. Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*

Mills (1940) has emphasized the use of specific *vocabularies of motive*, which, despite the social psychological basis of the concept are "in effect, no more than words used by actors in situations where they need to account for their conduct when questioned by others." (Campbell 1991: 90) These vocabularies therefore are not necessarily causal or even directly related to the actions, but can provide insight both into the (inter-)subjective understanding of the situation which guides that action, as well as the (perceived) structure which constrains, channels, or provides a model for interactional processes. (cf. Burke 1989) Motives "are a way for an observer to assign relevance to behavior in order that it may be recognized as another instance of normally ordered action," (Blum and McHugh 1971: 99–100) suggesting that their invocation to describe one's own or another's behavior can be practically similar but involve significantly different structural practices in terms of power, status, and interpretation. (cf. Austin 1965) Mills notes that vocabularies of motive are often specific to their institutional background and the types of behavior that are either required or valued there: for example, a doctor may present his handling of an uncooperative patient differently than a police officer, as the doctor can attribute his actions to an ultimate desire or mandate to heal, while the police officer has a mandate that may emphasize helping society over specific individuals and here use the language of punishment. (Kurtz and Upton 2017 cf. Manning 1995) A more extreme example could be found in the work of Westley (1953, 1970) where police officers often described violence as a form of punishment specifically against individuals who didn't conform to police expectations of them (often based on race)—yet at the same time Westley noted that actual occurrences of violence were predominantly legal and based on 'legitimate' policing exigencies: it is unclear whether the police are interpreting their actions differently than the guiding framework which gives them formal legitimacy, or simply telling stories in a way that asserts their authority but does not immediately correspond to the actions they would normally take. (Manning 1977, 2012, Waddington 1999)

Narrative constructions of self—through the frame of motive—are refined in the course of social interaction, whether conversation, monologue, or primarily 'symbolic' interaction based on gestures, the presentation of symbols, etc. (cf. Ricoeur 1984, Maines 1993, Ezzy 1998) The vocabularies on offer are not

unlimited, and also not fixed. While Mills suggested that they were likely a product of broader socio-cultural changes, such as the increasing use of 'public service' justifications by businessmen in the 20th century as pure 'profit seeking' became unfashionable, further explorations have focused more on the situational factors and interactional processes that provide meaning to various justifications and accounts, and thereby allow them to become useful. (Scott and Lyman 1968, Goffman 1981, Labov 1982, Ewick and Silbey 2005, cf. Foucault 1970) Burke's (1989) conception of vocabularies of motive emphasizes how structural changes in the social world can lead to 'disjointed' situations, where experiences do not firmly or clearly match any available vocabulary, causing individuals to feel alienated, similar to the Durkheimian understanding of the condition of *anomie.* Burke argues that individuals—making up society as a whole but each acting through their own understandings and personal motivations to establish a common solidarity—will search for, or attempt to create, new symbols of authority which can serve to establish, essentially, a common language which the speakers feel adequately conveys their understanding of (and position in) society, shared symbols which can serve "as an active way of maintaining cultural cohesion." (Burke 1969: 174, cf. Branaman 2016) While Burke's position is more macro-sociological and less overtly practical for analyzing day-to-day institutional routines, it does raise the question of how the police, as the public face of the government and justice (both institutionally and conceptually) manage to alternatingly and simultaneously include and exclude individuals from their common image of 'the public,' 'society,' and 'our community.' Common policing practices, such as separating individuals physically and deciding who is allowed to speak and when, often specifically limit the ability of individuals to provide suitable explanations, and while these types of interactions may be routine for the officers they will often be new and possibly frightening experience to others who are both lacking a 'proper' vocabulary to locate themselves in a social space and also find themselves constrained in attempts to develop one. Rhetorical and symbolic practices of inclusion and exclusion will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, as understanding how police practices shape their (imagined) communities requires a deeper understanding of the sources of and practices of establishing a police self-image within a culture of policing: that is, the use of narrative practices and vocabularies of motive internally within policing social worlds in ways that will affect how police view (or at least present and interact with) non-police social worlds.

Specifically relevant for policing occupational cultures is the establishing of 'common sense' as a motivation for action. (cf. McNulty 1994) Police decisions often—by their very nature—lack a specific inflexible basis, and attempts

to systemize the type of behaviors, appearances or statements that police should 'legitimately' consider suspicious have for the most part failed, leaving police discretion as something of a black box where officers are assumed to make decisions based on experience and learning from other police but at the same time being aware of which contributing factors are not sufficient on their own and which factors are best left out of official documents. (cf. Muir 1979, Meehan 1986, 1992, Manning 1988, Bittner 1990, Kelling 1999, Harcourt 2001, Marks 2004) This common sense basis has been described in terms of challenging institutional or bureaucratic frames; however, Bittner (1965) considers it simply a function of the embedded properties of the bureaucracy within the practices of everyday life. (cf. Schutz 1953)

Geertz (1975) describes four 'quasi-qualities' of common sense representations, defined in terms of being "natural, practical, thin, immethodological and accessible" (18) Naturalness, considered to be the most significant factor, refers to how common sense understandings are matters of course, where acceptable explanations require no deeper explanation; some local men were using drugs and almost died as a result (cf. Revier 2017) or, to use an example from Brandenburg, a teacher was insufficiently strict with students who brought vodka to school, so of course the students continued to bring alcohol—it is the nature of teenagers.

Practicalness, or practicality, does not refer only to a utilitarian or functional concept but rather to how effectively this knowledge can conceptually be applied to existing taxonomies or phenomenologies of social behavior and cause-and-effect, as well as how useful this knowledge might be in terms of cultural values which prize certain types of knowledge, and certain types of applicable explanations, over others: criminological theories are more likely to be of practical interest to the police if they can aid in extrapolating crime prevention or identification techniques, whether by identifying certain individuals or groups as criminals or by ascribing certain visible qualities to criminals and deviants; theories attributing crime or deviance to structural inequalities, poverty, discrimination, late-stage capitalism etc. are easily dismissed as too impractical to ring true in a 'common sense' analysis. (cf. Reuss-Ianni 1983, see also Worrall's [2013] description of the 'police sixth sense') Practical common sense explanations, however, were also used to rhetorically separate observed or known behavior from otherwise likely explanations, e.g. describing someone as a 'good kid' who made a mistake getting involved in drugs while maintaining that other (abstract) drug users deserve little sympathy because they voluntarily decided to take drugs in the first place; these types of explanations were also commonly used to mediate the descriptive role of violence, as described in Chapter Four.

Not entirely unrelatedly, thinness refers to how uncomplicated the common sense explanation can be, to the avoidance of appearing to 'try too hard' to make connections. The invocation of the fact that "some people are just bad" is a thin enough explanation to also be of practical use to provide a satisfying conclusion to a story or an episode. The importance of thinness seems to vary based on the social distance from (and narrator's disposition towards) the subject, with more abstract or anonymous actors being fully explainable with simple cause and effect statements and known actors often being allowed more 'wiggle-room' in allowing for various accounts and explanations to be taken seriously. (cf. Schönbach 2010) The variance in uses of common sense explanations speaks to their immethodologicalness (a term Geertz admits is terrible), to their *ad hoc* nature and selective, sometimes seemingly random, invocation and acceptance or rejection. Common sense comes in forms such as proverbs, slogans, jokes, anecdotes, and rhymes which may have little acceptance or latent meaning apart from their tactical use—evidenced for example by the use of "the exception proves the rule"[9] as a defense of a rule which has just been observed to not hold up to testing. Common sense arguments are not applied methodically, but rather are used in a variety of often inconsistent or contradictory ways, but their strength is deigned to be specifically within their common sense nature: it is those who question or challenge these assumptions, rather, who are engaging in rhetorical games.

Geertz's final 'quasi-quality' of common sense explanations is accessibility, the emphasis on the *common* aspect of common sense: essentially anyone within the relevant community should be able to understand the common sense explanations used within that community, if not necessarily apply the 'correct' lessons to the 'proper' situations. This is again what helps to make common sense practical and applicable: the burden of explanation is taken away from experts and instead a burden of understanding is put on the other. A police officer postulating that crossing against a red light is not only incorrect from a legal standpoint but also dangerous is not an opening for a spirited debate about public safety, personal responsibility, or the ability of the individual to make personal judgements of safety, but is rather an admonishment of the individual for doing something that,

[9] Interestingly, this phrase has been transmitted into German language culture, and was in fact used by the police on several occasions essentially as a 'throwaway phrase.' The German phrase, "Die Ausnahme bestätigt das Regel" literally translates to „the exception confirms the rule." A 'closer' historical translation would instead use the verb "prüfen" meaning 'to test' and would make it more clear that the English phrase originally had a more 'logical' basis with the word 'prove' meaning 'test,' as in the collocation "proving ground," but as the use of the word changed, the phrase remained in use and simply changed in terms of when and how it could be used. (Whorf 1940)

in this case—and it is of course highly relevant that this behavior was observed by the police—needs to be commonly thought of as 'wrong.' Common sense explanations, in a context where they are accessible, can be powerful rhetorical tools particularly within police work. The 'art' of them, however, lies in learning how to apply and establish them in a way that maintains the speaker's preferred definition of the situation as well as the overall ability to define situations: despite its 'commonness,' common sense as a source of knowledge is a learned skill, in the same way that individuals must be socialized into a community, society, and life world. (Cohen 1985)

Van Maanen (1974) notes that, based on his experience and observations within the police academy and field training, rookie officers will often be given 'general advice' but that "no veteran officer would consider telling a rookie who was not under his direct charge how to handle a particular call or what to do in a particular instance." (70) Rather than practical information on how to handle specific cases—according to Van Maanen, likely to be dismissed as irrelevant to the realities of the street anyway—officers learn motive talk and ways to present narratives so that they can satisfy both cultural expectations (i.e. in terms of shared expressed values) and institution necessities (as constructed against the cultural backdrop.) The presentation of narratives in line with cultural considerations serves not only to demonstrate a (tacit) acceptance of general cultural values—i.e. how things should be done or, more specifically, how things should be presented as being done—but also works as a form of boundary maintenance by demonstrating 'insider status' allowing for the ascription of motives and moral de-valuing of actors unable to construct and defend their own identity narratively. (cf. Hunt 1985, Cancino and Enriquez 2004, see also Copes 2016) Justifications for police actions such as the use of force—while not necessarily 'true' reflections of the police worldview—can show how the police dramaturgically legitimize their authority with respect to 'mainstream values' or 'mainstream society,' and evidence how different authorities are seen as relevant to different settings, contexts, and social actors. (Kurtz and Upton 2017)

6.5 Storytelling in Police Culture

> "When the detective in a police romance stands alone, and somewhat fatuously fearless amid the knives and fists of a thieves' kitchen, it does certainly serve to make us remember that it is the agent of social justice who is the original and poetic figure, while the burglars and footpads are merely placid old cosmic conservatives, happy in the immemorial respectability of apes and wolves. The romance of the police force is thus the whole romance of man. It is based on the fact that morality is the most

> dark and daring of conspiracies. It reminds us that the whole noiseless and unnoticeable police management by which we are ruled and protected is only a successful knight-errantry."
>
> – G.K. Chesterton, *A Defence of Detective Stories* (1901)

Police work can be boring. A significant amount of time is spent simply driving around, completing routine paperwork, and in various bureaucratic tasks. This reality generally doesn't conform to the idealized expectations of the general public, as police narratives have become a part of mass culture—and tend to emphasis scenes of action, drama and mystery. Simply put, police officers have a great deal of time in which to tell stories—particularly in the common case where two officers are assigned to work together for a longer period of time. While not unique to policing, the telling of stories has taken on a special significance in the occupational culture of policing. (Waddington 1999) The telling of stories, apart from simply an activity to pass the time, plays two significant roles: the stories, and their telling, has value as social capital, and the stories are often sources of knowledge which can be drawn upon.

Stories serve as social capital through their symbolic meaning as a commodity; stories represent *models of experience*, (van Dijk 1975: 286) which has been typically highly valued within policing occupational cultures. (Chan 2004, van Hulst 2013) These stories need not even be personal, simply collecting second-hand stories can demonstrate that the storyteller has experience, as well as the necessary access to networks where such stories are shared. The access to 'insider information' presents the storyteller as connected or important, not just through personal connections but by applying the proper cultural-institutional frame to the available facts—even if the source of those facts is publicly available. This was often observed in how personal details were incorporated into stories even when it was clear they would require further explanation or would trigger follow-up questions, e.g. referring to public officials by first name. McNulty (1994) describes how stories of the on-duty deaths of police officers was used as a reflection of the risks of policing and the fact that dangers can often be unexpected, but also included insider details to personalize or connect the stories to the details and make them more relevant to an audience of police recruits: even though most officers would likely never be in a similar situation, the stories were made more visceral to make them something more relatable. These types of stories are often interpreted to reflect the core values of police work; often at odds with the routine experiences of most officers. As a result, 'effective' storytelling often includes elements of conflict or violence (as described in the previous chapter)

although stories emphasizing conflict-resolution or more banal situations such as basic misunderstandings were also commonly told.

From a functional perspective, many of these stories could be interpreted as 'tests' of the audience, attempting to shock, push boundaries, or simply gauge reactions: many of these stories could be categorized as either 'war stories,' emphasizing some of the hardships of police work while presenting classical value attributions, or 'horror stories,' which challenge presumed mainstream values and sensibilities and, without necessarily glorifying violence or gore, tend to suggest that a competent police officer has either a strong stomach or a robust sense of humor. (cf. Ewick and Silbey 1995, Crank 1998, Ford 2003, Kurtz and Upton 2017) The challenge to the listener is not just to react to the story in a normatively 'correct' way, fulfilling their ascribed or desired social role, but to do so in a way that imagines the story as a real event, putting themselves in the place of the narrator or protagonist: for example, stories demonstrating graphic scenes of violence may emphasize the amount of blood or physical damage to human bodies, not simply attempting to 'gross out' the audience but implicitly communicating, "this is the kind of thing I have to deal with." The telling of the story may reinforce that the specific event is unique, uncommon or unexpected, but at the same time it emphasizes the binding of the storytelling context and the narrative itself, that a police officer may have to deal with this type of situation, and that a *good* police officer will be able to handle listening to the story just as they would in some way be able to handle similar experiences. (Conti 2009) This fulfills an *emotional function* (van Dijk 1975: 286) in which certain reactions by the audience are anticipated, centered around the normative or moral interpretation of the story. While these stories may include learning / teaching components, generally the most overt purpose of the story is *to be told,* to present or explore values, and the most likely learning function of the story is in presenting models that can be loosely applied to future situations.

Marks et al. (2016) emphasize the fluidity of policing culture based on the fact that:

> cultural knowledge is not fixed, but is continuously and contextually contested, and is arguably far more dynamic than is comfortable for easy analysis. Indeed, even axiomatic knowledge (i.e. the police mandate or mission) that might be considered the apex of police cultural knowledge is not uniformly received or espoused. Police officers are furthermore drawn from many walks of life, and do not necessarily share similar outlooks or draw on the same pools of cultural knowledge; this means that they have different perceptions of their environment and the people they police. (319)

The similarities between police stories and storytelling format may be a stronger representation of the culture than the content of the stories themselves, as the background and shared assumptions may lead to police 'telling the same old stories' when appropriate but taking the stories told by others with more than a grain of salt. (Waddington 1999) The genres and forms of stories may be relevant in broadly determining to what extent stories are 'functional' in terms of being entertainment, ritual, informative or some combination. This includes examining in what ways stories establish common sense arguments or include mutually identifiable elements, e.g. including known actors or locations to say something about those elements.

The settings of how and where stories are told likely affects the choice and structuring of the story, though to what extent stories are molded to fit certain audiences or simply not told in 'mixed company' is unclear and in either event unlikely to be a universal factor common to all policing organizations. (Fletcher 1996, Cockcroft 2005, Van Hulst 2019) Dozens of policing narratives were recorded from officers (both within and separate from the Revierpolizei) in Brandenburg, in settings including over morning coffee in unit offices, in one-on-one settings in squad cars or walking through town, in meetings with other official agencies such as the Ordnungsamt or the fire department, in public settings such as street festivals or the Christmas Market with audiences including acquaintances of the officer, retired officers, and public officials, at private events, in restaurants, or in officers' homes. Fletcher (1996) describes using one-on-two interviews to encourage officers to 'tell each other stories,' to attempt to maintain or approximate the 'normal' context of policing stories: the majority of witnessed narratives were in one-on-one situations due to the fact that Revierpolizei officers generally work alone on normal duty, but the situations in which officers told stories to audiences of other officers (and, at least not obviously, not only for my benefit) tended to fit better to the models of storytelling presented in the literature. Unlike the examples presented by Fletcher, larger audiences were rare, as it was already uncommon to encounter more than four or five officers in a room at the same time; the cases where larger audiences came together tended to be less common events, though the performative nature of these was generally more evident.

6.5.1 War Stories

The traditional police 'war story' is often cited as being central to policing culture. (Van Maanen 1973, Reuss-Ianni 1984, Fletcher 1996, Ford 2003, Kurtz and

Upton 2017) The term itself is inconsistently defined but used in a way that is assumed to be self-evident within the culture; essentially a war story is a story of one's experience in the field consistent with the perceptions of values, risks, desired traits and potential outcomes that are highlighted, valued, or communicated through the broader policing culture. Ford (2003) describe war stories as:

> a recounting of idealized events, entertaining humor, or police-related social commentary. They carry a message celebrating police values or techniques. They are aptly named war stories because they often deal with the physical side of policing. War stories deal with the heroic, the extreme, and the cynically humorous. They paint a picture of policing that is often at odds with daily tedium and frequently contradict official ways. (86)

Fletcher (1996) refers to stories in which "the narrator plays a heroic role against a criminal" (39), though many stories seem to be ones of failure or almost failure: the point, however, seems to be to provide not only an account of one's experience but to offer some general lesson about police work, often presented in contrast to (presumed) 'outsider' assumptions. As Van Hulst (2019) notes, the point of the lesson might not necessarily be to *teach*, however; rather the inclusion of the cautionary element is what makes it into an effectively *tellable* story. War stories are, by this interpretation, often identical to the types of cautionary tales described by Hughes (1958) but emphasizing some specific forms to make them relevant to policing. War stories become cultural capital for police and developing a hardened attitude towards violence and its use becomes a rite of passage. (Marks 2004) This proved to be the case even when the violence itself wasn't actively celebrated; the status benefits from the telling of the stories were derived instead from the experience and knowledge of the events, from their use as potentially useful lessons, and from their divergence from every routine or expectations. (Ewick and Silbey 1995, Martin 1999, Van Hulst 2013)

Maurice Punch (1979, also cited in Van Hulst 2013) provides an example of a war story less focused on heroism and more on the potential for risk and violence even when the officer himself is the only danger:

> My very first night duty I nearly shot someone dead. Not intentionally though! Suddenly there was a call that a man had been seen creeping into a school. My mentor was a constable first-class, fifty-three years old, really great bloke, and we went into the school to carry out the search. The school had separate toilets, all the toilets were in rows, and you had no idea what you might come across. I saw my mentor pull out his pistol and I did the same. I'm not usually frightened, but if you walk through a dark school at night it is not like sitting at home eating fish and chips. Suddenly I

> pulled open a toilet door. Nothing. Another door. Again nothing. Then the next door, with your in your hand and your finger on the trigger, and there sat the bloke. I shit myself. I felt a muscle-cramp shoot through my finger and, dammit, if the thing had been cocked then the bloke was a goner. But I jumped out of my skin. (105)

For police officers, especially less experienced officers or recruits, war stories are an opportunity to "pick… up on tactics people use to make things happen. And some of those things are really funny." (Fletcher 1996: 38) As in the above example, these are not always positive examples of how things *should* be done, but very often examples of how things *can* happen if an officer is not mentally prepared for the situation or makes the kind of mistakes that officers are supposed to avoid specifically because they have heard stories.

War stories may be first-hand or at least believable accounts connected to known elements (places or people), but these types of stories often "transform into tall-tales or parables becoming further exaggerated with time." (Kurtz and Upton 2017: 548) Storytelling is often associated with informal or semi-formal situations, i.e. in canteens or during 'down time' between formal situations such as briefings or meetings. These stories have often been recorded within sessions, in which various stories are chained together, linked, or serve as inspiration for a follow-up. (Van Hulst 2013)

Just as Hughes (1958) found, many of the war stories were highly cautionary, with those involving violence often implementing a *consequences of failure* mechanism, or else describing *warning signs* which were not taken seriously enough (or only taken seriously at the last minute.) A notable feature of many war stories recounted to me was the inclusion of a level of abstraction—often it was unclear, at least in the original telling, if the narrator had actually been present, or who was actually doing what. For example, the story of a suspect fleeing from the police who was accidentally killed by a warning shot was presented in a way where I was unsure if this had happened prior to or after the unification of East and West Germany. This fit to this conception of war stories, as the important elements for drawing a lesson are found in the actions and mechanisms: the story is a warning to take the use of potentially deadly force seriously, and not intended to communicate anything about a specific officer, location, or even really a specific event beyond the proposition that this sequence of events did in fact occur. These abstractions may have been related to the fact that the audience (an audience of one field researcher, in this case) was unlikely to be at all familiar with additional elements and so they were better left out, but in contrast many stories were told specifically about local places or individuals even when those details could easily have been omitted. In this particular narrative there was no additional

background on the suspect / victim or on the officer nor on the aftermath of the scene: as a war story, the narrative works as a parable specifically because it is not constrained by prologue or epilogue.

6.5.2 Horror Stories

Horror stories, apart from war stories, seemed to be designed in contrast to 'mainstream' values (at least in terms of tolerance for disgusting, shocking or bloody situations.) Horror stories can "serve to denote the peculiar attributes of the police occupational code and also serve to detach patrolmen from the more polite social world of their origin." (Van Maanen 1974: 94) They can often serve as a form of secondary initiation, as a way to test who is 'too squeamish' to handle (hypothetical) possible incidents. Behr (1993: 58) describes not just stories but cases of officers copying and sharing photographs of car accidents and using these essentially, informally, as 'tests of inner strength' with the sometimes stated reasoning that officers need to be able to handle such scenes when they happen and should therefore have no problem viewing or learning about them in outside contexts.

While actual examples show a great degree of variety—and also a good degree of overlap with other forms, making the actual cut-off for horror stories highly subjective—these stories as a group could be generally divided into those that were darkly comedic and those that were more horrific. The difference here is not at all determined by the shock value of the content, but rather by the background and juxtapositions being constructed: horrific stories emphasized how brutal, remorseless, or hateful individuals (or "the world" or "society" etc.) can be, while dark comedy stories contrast everyday routine police behavior with the non-routine shocking (at a minimum, shocking to 'mainstream society') behavior which they encounter. One example of a dark comedy story was presented by a police officer to me in the presence of several officers from the Revierpolizei in the typical 'canteen' setting, in this case in a break room over coffee:

> We had a report of a suicide out in the woods [outside a nearby village] and when we got there the body was hanging from a tree. It had rained, and everything was muddy. We drove out and found the body hanging, and then called for a car [presumably an ambulance], and then we found out that our car was stuck in the mud. The tires just spun. We called for someone to get us out of the mud. Then a tow truck showed up, and hooked up our car, and got stuck in the mud. Meanwhile more officers ["Kollegen"; lit: colleagues] showed up, and right away everyone was stuck too. It turned into something like a party, everyone just chatting about nothing ["quatschen"] but there's

> just this guy hanging from a rope in the background. We were there for a few hours before we could do anything. (Reconstructed from field notes)

The story here emphasizes the absurdity of the image of co-workers having normal 'water-cooler' conversations against the backdrop of a dead body hanging from a tree. At the same time, it emphasizes the everyday absurdity of basic mistakes or things that could go wrong, rather than police-specific problems, in this case having multiple cars, sequentially, getting stuck in the mud. While few policing values are specifically highlighted in this story, there is an implication that police officers are able to find downtime whenever possible, or at least to treat a situation as everyday or routine when there is nothing immediate that can be done to remedy a problem.[10] There was no emphasis in this telling on anyone specifically being responsible or needing to learn a lesson, and very little attribution of motive to any characters beyond simply 'doing their jobs.' The closest thing to an antagonist was the mud itself, but no one is admonished for failing to deal with it. The horror story in its usage seems to be more of a story of things happening *around* police officers, which they may have to deal with, but unlike war stories, which emphasize what happens *to* officers, there is less emphasis put on how the officer reacted and the moral value of it (in terms of whether it was risky, necessary, good, bad, etc.) Horror stories seem to be more like 'residual' narratives, stories which have been collected that are interesting primarily because of their break from *everyday* normality (by their gruesomeness, etc.) but which have little to offer specifically in terms of how to do police work; it is likely for this reason that horror stories seem to be often presented either comedically or with a heavy emphasis on the shock value. Likely, many stories which *could* be told as horror stories simply are not told because they would not work in either of these formats. Van Hulst (2013) describes how 'tragic' stories such as fatal car accidents seem to be the type least told; the stories of this nature which were

[10] A similar (likely apocryphal) story was recounted to me by a police officer in the US, where the scene of a (possibly fatal) car accident several decades ago resulted in multiple police officers responding and being unable to leave the scene until it was cleared, and after hours of boredom the officers decided to set up an impromptu shooting range of empty cans on top of a squad car. The officers took turns shooting the cans off the light rack, until one officer missed and put a bullet through the lights, and panic ensued as the officers attempted to establish a story for how something like that could legitimately happen. The story was told in the context of explaining how even crime scenes are mostly boring, a great deal of police work is waiting around, and police officers will often look for unorthodox ways to entertain themselves on-duty.

encountered primarily had some type of "outside consequence" mechanism, in which the outcome was not simply randomly tragic but also served as a warning against whatever mistake led to it, such as drunk driving or texting while driving, and were usually not told entirely spontaneously but rather only offered up as we were passing the scene of a previous accident or a stretch of road considered to be especially dangerous.

6.6 Police Culture and Policing Narratives

The officers in the Revierpolizei tended to be older than most patrol officers—both a result of the specialized unit as well as demographic factors and the rural character of the region—most newer officers prefer to be assigned in more urban areas, at least early in their career. This certainly affected the types of stories that were told: many of the officers had been members of the Volkspolizei prior to German reunification, or at least had worked with many officers who had been. Stories about the 1980s—not always specifically about police work but more in general about the region of specific towns, villages or people—were often prefaced with an almost ritualistic, typically self-ironic, "I wouldn't want those times back, but…" ("Ich hätte die Zeiten nicht gern wieder, aber…") Somewhat in contrast to the description of hegemonic masculinity presented by Fletcher (1996), Behr (2000) and others, gender was less openly specifically brought up (though not never!) This may have been a result of the fact that while women were generally underrepresented locally in the police compared to the general population—consistent with policing in Germany and most countries—the women working within the jurisdiction had relatively high positions within the Revierpolizei, with a female officer in charge of one of the three jurisdictional units. The types of social networking described in urban policing ethnography—where multiple squads will regularly meet for beers after shift while excluding other squad members—simply did not seem to exist in the same way, likely related to the rural characteristic of the region (many officers lived somewhat far away), the fact that Revierpolizei officers tended to be older, married, and from the region (meaning they may be more likely to have social circles outside of the police than someone who moved for the assignment), the mix of consistent morning shifts with occasionally evening shifts to cover special events, festivals etc., and the relatively small size of the organizational overall when compared to the type of departments more typically examined ethnographically. (cf. Young 1993, Huey and Ricciardelli 2015)

The way in which stories were told was otherwise similar to that generally established in the extant literature in terms of form and function. Narratives were used to entertain as well as to teach general rules and provide specific information about locations, people, and problems. In some ways, the need for relying on transmitted second-hand knowledge was even stronger, as personal and situational relationships were highly significant and officers attempted to get a broader context whenever possible (cf. Banton 1964, Young 1993), but in other ways less practical within a police-specific context, as outside of cities officers were solely responsible for their jurisdiction and the knowledge they gained would rarely be useful for other officers unless another officer were to take over. Bittner (1970), after describing the range of individuals and locations which officers demonstrate detailed knowledge of, states that:

> No matter how rich such factual knowledge of an area and its residents is, however, it can never encompass more than a fraction of reality. Many places have not been visited and most persons are not recognized. Thus it appears that though interest is directed to the accumulation of factually descriptive information, as opposed to the desire to achieve a theoretically abstract understanding, the ulterior objective is to be generally knowledgeable rather than merely being factually informed. That is, patrolmen seek to be sufficiently enlightened to be able to connect the yet unknown with the known through extrapolation and analogy. By this method they are always in the position to reduce the open and unrestricted variety of interpretative possibilities that baffles outsiders to a far more restrictive range. They always have, as it were, something to go on. (91)

Bittner further compares this gathering and application of knowledge of police to an ethnographic understanding: no cases are truly unique nor truly exemplary, but are rather interpretable "particular instances of a class." However, while Bittner finds that officers are typically left on their own to learn their neighborhoods and the general classes of things they will encounter, the case of the Revierpolizei demonstrated a stronger continuity of narrative understandings. Even as officers worked alone in their jurisdictions, it was important for them to maintain common narratives with key partners, such as local officials—often the Ordnungsamt—or community leaders. Additionally, stories were often shared specifically to provide instruction in terms of explaining a person, place or thing, as events do not always respect jurisdiction boundaries, and often officers would cover for others or collaborate. City officers, in particular, needed to work together and keep other officers up to date. The teaching function of narratives could be observed both in providing ways of interpreting scenes as well as in providing direct, already interpreted, information.

6.6.1 Teaching through Narrative

"Officers cannot readily state the principles that they use to simplify the situational complexities they face. The best they can do is to tell anecdotes." (Bayley and Bittner 1984: 49)

The use of narratives in instructing police officers is evidenced both in academy training and in how narratives, especially war stories, can be used, contextualized, or curated by experienced officers to be meaningful for other officers in ways that can be applied to their own experiences. (Ford 2003, Conti 2009, Van Hulst 2013) A hostility towards the concept of training has often been identified—at least within US policing cultures—and theoretically linked to the idea that police work is social, reflexive, and contextual: that there is rarely an effective one-size-fits all approach. (cf. Bittner 1970) However, the literature focusing on the use of narratives has found that police training often takes place not so much through formal lectures as it does through the recounting of war stories not dissimilar to the typical canteen stories. These stories can provide a "vocabulary of precedents… and a worldview that provides a way of seeing and experiencing the world." (Shearing and Ericson 1991: 491) A major emphasis of these stories, discussed among others by McNulty (1994), is on identifying incongruities. As previously described, policing narratives tend to be unique by having a different emphasis on what elements are considered 'interesting' and which are simply mundane; McNulty describes how academy instructs introduced this way of thinking to police recruits:

> The focus on incongruity was especially evident in the strategies that the staff recommended for initiating action in the disordered world. For example, they taught the recruits to avoid the abstract question, "Where does the truth lie?" Instead, they proposed a more concrete question, "What's wrong with this picture?" as a means of recognizing whether things were "out of place." The class sergeant told recruits that looking for something *suspicious* was less effective than looking for the *unusual,* because *suspicious* was so difficult to define. (286)

Looking for something that is out of place is not obviously a more analytically helpful practice for police work than looking for something suspicious: both concepts still need to be given meaning and then applied to situations. However, the concept of suspicion and truth implied by the instructors are likely interpreted as more related to strict structures, rules and procedures which would remain applicable across situations; the skills for identifying problems or situations in this

case would be based on collecting formal knowledge of how to proceed. Police learned to consider the process of identifying things as incongruous as *common sense*; at the same time, the specific examples of where one could look, of tell-tale signs that something wasn't right, of what kind of behaviors, characteristics, or signs might be indicators for other problems, and of what kinds of things should and should not be tolerated when, where, and by whom, are things that need to be learned, tested out, and applied. McNulty's recruits, looking for signs of serious crime in every situation, shared stories and examples, such as inspecting the rear license plate of abandoned cars for dead flies, which could indicate that the plate was previously on the front of a different car likely reported stolen. Another example of looking for congruity is similar to the uses of civil inattention discussed in Chapter Three; an officer describes aggressively shining a flashlight at a potential suspect—who had done nothing to merit suspicion—and then deciding to search the individual based on the fact that he did not flinch or react. The assumption here is that officers anticipate what kind of reaction to their presence or actions would be normal and can then attempt certain practices which might lead to a (guilty) individual over- or underreacting as a way to avoid suspicion, but by doing so making themselves stand out more. These practices are found in the type of stories that are highly valued, because they demonstrate both clever police work and provide examples of the type of incongruities that provide 'common sense' justifications for suspicion. (cf. Van Maanen 1973, 1974) Understanding the processes of understanding situations as one of common sense in this way allows for *experience* to be translated into knowledge, even if that experience is second-hand and transmitted through stories told by instructors, mentors and colleagues. Officers are given examples of ways to view objects, people, and behaviors as 'abnormal' and act upon them in different ways based on explanations that may not be methodologically consistent, but are practical, understandable ('natural') and accessible (at least to other police officers within the same situated encounter) enough based on their simplicity. (Geertz 1975)

This understanding of police work, and how its knowledge is transmitted, is reminiscent of the sociological mandate to make the familiar unfamiliar and the unfamiliar familiar. (cf. Berger and Luckmann 1966) The construction of policing narratives mirrors the attempt to develop an eye for viewing things in terms of incongruities relevant to the immediate goals of police work, of approaching situations and individuals both in consideration of the immediate visible situation and of the countless essentially unknowable potentials. The example here

emphasizes determining incongruities as a way to still legitimately detect objective crime, on the basic of 'common knowledge' as a legitimating factor, but similar perspectives could be identified in how police learn to identify what type of behavior should be considered acceptable or unacceptable and how community or institutional values are interpreted.

The stories police officers tell each other establish can be intended to, or have the function of, establish(ing) a sense of normality or routine; not necessarily even in what will happen in a typical shift, but of what types of problems are seen as something that can be predictably handled and what types of problems will require clever solutions or additional resources. Bayley and Bittner (1984) find that:

> American patrol officers recognize these variable features of the work they do and can talk about them with discernment. They have an acute sense of where danger lies and what kinds of situations cause them the greatest difficulty in deciding what to do. In fact, they are so accustomed to thinking about the place of discretion in policing that a favorite in-house joke is that their most problematic situation during each shift is deciding where to go for lunch. (37)

Bayley and Bittner describe typical patterns in how police learn what types of situations or locations are predictably risky or risk-free and what types of encounters qualify as a true 'break from normality,' as opposed to what might be considered the 'routine chaos' of police work. Worrall (2016) considers the adaption of a common sense view of situations developed through stories, through training and experience, to be a likely foundation for the police "sixth sense." An important distinction could be made in the mechanism of the stories: sometimes narratives are general or common sense, telling something about social processes and the routines and expectations of police work, and sometimes they are specific local knowledge, giving a basis for making predictions about known places, people and events.

6.6.2 Linked and Linking Narratives

Narratives are rarely entirely specific in terms of provided details, but rarely so abstract as to be completely detached from time and space. Two contrasting qualities of narratives were identified that played a significant role in how these stories were or could be used in terms of transmitting knowledge, imparting

moral lessons, or simply participating in the police culture practice of storytelling: whether the narrative was primarily *linked* or *linking*. These terms refer to how the setting, characters, and other relevant elements of the narrative were connected to specific identifiable subjects or more abstract in a way that implied an ‘everyman’ quality. While these forms are not necessarily mutual exclusive and may be differently interpreted depending on the individual and their own knowledge of people, places, and events, the relationship between the form and the overt practical use of the narrative made it clear in most cases whether the narrative was ‘best’ interpreted as linked or linking. The use of linked and linking here refers to narratives in their entirety—and therefore in their application and interpretation—so that while specific elements of a narrative may be identified or abstracted, the narrative as a whole will become, within its institutional setting, either one of a general rule or one of specific characters and settings. The narrative will either be about *something that can happen anywhere* or *something that did happen, somewhere.*

Linked narratives connect directly to identifiable elements—people, places, specific actions, events, etc.—with their own qualities that are not assumed to be universal. While many policing war stories simply refer to “an officer,” the types of stories told among co-workers who have shared many of the same or similar experiences often identify specific officers as major characters and involve plots based around perceived characteristics of that officer: a story about an officer who refuses to use his car’s navigation device, gets lost, but refuses to admit so might not be as relevant or tellable as a story about *Officer Schmidt,* who is known for his stubbornness and refusal to even attempt to use new technology. Stories often focus on specific known offenders or people who often come into contact with the police, or on specific towns or neighborhoods which are then associated with specific qualities, such as villages where the inhabitants are known to call the police frequently and with little justification, or an apartment complex where the police need to always be on guard. These kinds of narratives may often work just as well without the specific links to identifiable subjects, but including these links allows the narrator to transmit knowledge: while some stories may primarily be told to entertain, others are overtly intended to instruct, to warn, or to make an example.

Linking narratives, on the other hand, apply *general rules*, as the characters are more abstract and closer to ideal types. A story of a violent police-citizen encounter which offers no details as to the location may imply that such encounters *could* happen anywhere (though these need not be the main point of the

narrative or even implied at all.) Linking narratives better fit moral lessons as a result—rather than being linked to specific, possibly unique, things, they provide a link to a broader understanding of *how the world works*. Some linking narratives are explicit, e.g. outright stating that this is how things *always* work.[11] To be accessible—that is, readily understood and therefore understood as a matter-of-course—these narratives must also be practical and offer some lesson or function that can be applied. (Geertz 1975) Linking narratives are essentially propositions for belief—further refinement might be needed by the audience for the narrative to completely make sense or have expressible meaning, i.e. "a man attacked a police officer" may still suggest a certain type of man or at least exclude others from the list of possible visualizations, but the overall narrative is broad and becomes, in its implications, more about things that *could* happen than about connecting what has happened with specific attributes of the included narrative elements. This type of narrative is then more likely to be accepted (or rejected) as plausible or real based on the fact that it emphasizes risk and danger—e.g. to many police the idea that someone would want to attack a police officer is believable enough without further context, and the use of these symbolic assailant narratives is relatively common in the literature on police storytelling as well as in the case at hand. Stories do not necessarily need to be accepted as true to be able to teach a lesson, but linking narratives especially are based on at least an element of implied truth—that an identifiable case actually happened as described, either based on attributes imputed to the actors and setting, or allowing the audience to apply these attributions as way to explain the events. The basic narrative "the chief of the fire department attacked a police officer" would not readily be interpretable or applicable as a major lesson relevant for police (depending, of course, on the particular jurisdiction) but if the fire chief was already a known character-individual with a history of violence and a personal and public 'beef' with a certain police officer, it might be. Or else it might lead to the establishment of a new understanding by those who accept the story as true, who might now view

[11] Sudnow (1965) provides statements from public defenders about certain types of crimes and the individuals associated with them, for example: "Dope addicts do O.K. until they lose a job or something and get back on the streets and, you know, meet the old boys. Someone tells them where to get some and there they are." (260) or: "Most ADWs (assault with deadly weapon) start with fights over some girl." (259) Sudnow analyzes how these types of statements are used to construct 'normal' (ideal type) crimes, and then in the course of pretrial negotiation are compared to linked narratives to determine whether specific cases can be legitimately considered a member of that class of crime, based on this conception of normality rather than legal definitions. As with policing, these normal type definitions can influence how cases, individuals, or behaviors are treated based more on the associated elements than the thing in itself. (cf. Westley 1970, Van Maanen 1974)

the fire chief as violent, unstable, anti-police, or even establish new narratives of rivalry between the police and the fire department. The lessons drawn in this case are only applicable to specific situations; police narratives, however, rarely come this stripped down and almost always include framing elements indicating what type of lesson could or should be taken from them. The elements that identify linked narratives—personal details, etc.—at the same time identify *knowledge* as a value (in the same way that McNulty [1994] describes officers incorporating 'unnecessary' personal details into second-hand stories to make them more credible.) This sets these narratives apart from those which emphasize more general skills which can be used in a variety of situation.

6.6.3 Linking Narratives: Skills and Knowledge

The 'common sense' basis of police decision-making would here be more associated with linking narratives, as they are more about potentialities and general rules that could be applied in a variety of situations, in contrast to linked narratives which are less useful as general guides for action and only situationally useful as sources of knowledge. They establish a narrative of 'natural order' which, once understood, can often be taken for granted, but also can be wielded to legitimize or delegitimize the accounts of other within the context of communal or social values.[12] (Geertz 1975) However, it should be noted that linked narratives can easily be extrapolated to serve essentially the same function, and this practice was often observed as part of the narrative: individual elements can be defined as part of a larger case, for example "we had a similar situation with Stephan, one

[12] Geertz, reading the work of Evans-Pritchard, describes how 'witchcraft' is used among the Azande to describe a variety of 'unexpected' incidents, such as an injured foot or a fired clay pot breaking. "[H]owever 'mystical' the content of Zande witchcraft beliefs may or may not be (and I have already suggested they seem so to me only in the sense that I do not myself hold them), they are actually employed by the Zande in a way anything but mysterious—as an elaboration and defense of the truth claims of colloquial reason… For all the talk about its flying about in the night like a firefly, witchcraft doesn't celebrate an unseen order, it certifies a seen one," (1975: 11) as "when an inexperienced potter's pot cracks it is put down, as seems only reasonable, to his inexperience, not to some ontological kink in reality." (12) It is those who are able to effectively claim they made no mistakes who are also able to blame their misfortune (and mistakes) on others, outside forces, or simple bad luck, and those who cannot adequately defend their skills and talent can easily be blamed as confirmation of the common sense rule that a lack of skill and talent leads to a subpar outcome.

of those drunks who always hangs out near the bar across from the train station." In this case, the specific individual is being identified but is also 'lumped in' with a larger group, meaning that one could make the same (negative) assumptions about Stephan whether they were aware of him, his group, or the bar and its surroundings, or not. Ford (2003) presents an example of a policing 'parable' from an academy instructor which, in his analysis, is intended to teach a lesson about possible policing strategies but also seems to generally make a comment about possible offenders:

> As a cop, everybody wants to tell you their side of the story. I remember once at a fight call, the perp ran up to me and wanted to tell me what happened. So, I said to the guy, "I can't talk to you unless you waive your rights." He wanted to explain his side so much that he waived his rights… and I made the case. (96)

This narrative is framed by giving a general rule right from the start: everybody wants to tell you their side of the story. The remainder of the narrative is then an example of this happening in a non-descript place with few details—that the person telling his side of the story to the narrator might have a legitimate claim or actually be the victim is not considered within this narrative, invoking a related generalized lesson along the lines of 'perps are dumb' or 'perps don't consider their best interests.' (cf. Van Maanen 1978, see also Wagner et al. 2009) In this case, however, it is not relevant to the narrative to know anything more about this individual other than that he is already established as guilty before it is established in the narrative how his guilt has been proven. The tactic the officer employs—in this case tricking the individual into waiving his rights—is then demonstrated as a clever way to take advantage of the general rule presented here. Accepting this story as demonstrative would be accepting that a) the guilty party will often want to tell their side of the story and b) a clever police officer can use this to his or her advantage, as demonstrated.

This story is an example of a story used to "teach street skills," and this categorization and function fits to the linking nature of the narrative as well as its basic framework. Overall, Ford divides war stories into ten mutually exclusive categories: these are, however, not entirely convincing, as the categories seem to overlap to a significant degree and over half of the stories are considered to be primarily focused on "teaching street skills," with a quarter primarily about

"danger / uncertainty"[13] and several of the remaining categories only significantly used as a secondary classification. These categories emphasize the moral lessons or function of the story, rather than specifically what elements make them into policing stories, or stories worth telling. The applicability of ten distinct categories does, however, emphasize the diversity of stories told, as well as the contrast between them, even in an academy setting where communicating skills and knowledge seems to be the primary function. The fact that these types of parables are intended to teach *skills* to police recruits means that almost are of these narratives are structured in a linking manner: the use of personalized details, if at all, serves more to give credibility to the narrative. The linked portions of the narrative serve more to identify broader groups or types of offenders, but the examples presented in the text tend to refer to individuals as "dirtbags," "perps," "the guy" or, solely in the cases of victims or bystanders, "the man" or "the woman." These unlinked elements are essentially pre-coded in the narrative: applying the lesson to a scene would require an officer to already know what makes an automobile with four occupants into "this car full of scumbags" (Ford 2003: 96)

The most notable division here is not entirely dissimilar from the distinction previously made between war stories and horror stories, with the 'teaching skills' stories often focusing on what officers *do* and 'danger' stories focusing on

[13] Ford additionally notes that "danger" and "uncertainty" were originally separate categories, but were combined after several examples were cross-categorized in re-testing. The imputed difference seems to be between stories which have a general lesson that police should always consider themselves in danger—symbolic assailant narratives, as well as others more focused on dangers in society—and those that seem to de-prioritize *outside* systems of knowledge. While differing in other ways, the horror stories previously described also fulfill this role, essentially stating that what is 'normal' for police (in a long-term, generic sense, as the officer in the stories do not always experience the situation as normal) would not be normal or predictable for outsiders of any kind. Uncertainty narratives are likely among the easiest to create based on police experience, but not always tellable enough to be worth putting into the form of a story—the challenge here seems to be making a story where the uncertainty is both surprising, ironic, or comedic both from the perspectives of the characters and to the audience without undercutting the premise that uncertainty in policing is normal; this may explain the difficulty in separating pure "uncertainty" narratives, which could likely serve a variety of functions in terms of teaching and entertaining, from "danger" narratives with a more specific normative function. Many of the additional categories created by Ford seem to be reducible to one of these two if considered this way, as many of the stories were about officers being positively surprised by citizens they expected the worst from, or being assaulted, disrespected, or otherwise treated poorly by citizens they were attempting to help.

what others do *to* officers.[14] Some of the examples are more about uncertainty and seem more to amuse (and are likely based in police folklore rather than experience) than educate in the manner presented for 'street skills': one example describes officers mocking a drunk for reporting seeing an elephant, only to then encounter an escaped circus elephant. The narratives which focus on actual danger seem to consistently employ symbolic assailant mechanisms, focusing more on the fact that anyone, even the victim or bystanders, can suddenly become violent. Overall, the examples presented by Ford demonstrate one specific model of communicating police knowledge-based skills—that based on linking narratives, establishing general rules applicable to society broadly, and in this case essentially reinforcing the concept of a strict, consistent policing culture. Other examples demonstrate police officers interpreting situations based on linking narratives even when they don't seem to be otherwise supported by the immediate situation, essentially a case of the ecological fallacy: this is particular prevalent in descriptions of encounters between French police and minority youth presented by Fassin (2013) and de Maillard et al. (2016) in which police would openly state that "Arabs / North Africans are all criminals," and use this premise as a basis to justify further investigation. Linking narratives make broad statements—whether justified or not—which can be fit to diverse and unique encounters in order to make sense of them. These types of stories emphasize that police work is about knowing what to do without needing specific guidelines for individual situations,

[14] One police narrative presented by Van Maanen (1974) may challenge this dichotomy, presenting a story that seems to fit the criteria for a horror story but through its linked elements also presents a potential model of policing values (having a strong stomach) while also distancing those values from the presumed expectations of the narrator or audience:

> Man that Sergeant Kelly is something… Remember that night that David Squad nailed that shithead coming out of Mission Liquor Store? Blew him up with a couple of rifle slugs and the guy's brains were splattered all over the sidewalk. You couldn't even tell if the dude was white or black 'cause of blood he was swimming in. Anyway we're standing there waiting for the coroner to show, when Sergeant Kelly decides it's time to eat. So what does he do? He goes back to his unit, grabs his brown bag and proceeds to come back and start chowing down on an egg sandwich. Jesus!! You shoulda seen the face on the kid working in the liquor store. (94).

Interpreting this story hermeneutically would require a deeper understanding of whether Sergeant Kelly and his image to the audience is relevant, or whether he is also essentially being played to character here, demonstrating both something that police will understand (while outsiders wouldn't) but also showing an awareness of how shocking, deviant, or unsettling that something could be interpreted as (to an outsider but within the narrative also to an insider.)

"convey[ing]… a general sense of what to watch, whom to watch, and in a most general sense, how to proceed." (Ford 2003: 103)

6.6.4 Linked Narratives: Knowledge and Skills

Observation of the Revierpolizei in Brandenburg (as well as additional examples based in small-town, rural, or community-oriented policing settings) suggest an additional 'teaching' model, which would conversely be based more on linked narratives. Police working in fixed areas are able to share experiences using more insider and specialized knowledge of people, places, and events. The types of stories described by Ford (2003) as 'teaching street skills' were not uncommon—some have been described in the previous chapter—but the core function of the Revierpolizei, at least as presented through narratives, very often seemed to be *knowing*. The stories shared which best served a teaching function in terms of what-to-do were often *negative* examples—often employing outside consequence or consequences of failure narrative mechanisms—which instead emphasized what-not-to-do. (cf. Hughes 1958)

The skills of policing were instead emphasized more based on knowing *what to look out for*, closer to the idea of establishing 'common sense' as a basis for decision-making and action (McNulty 1994) but in terms of experiential or shared specific knowledge. This was often related to geographical knowledge and understanding connections between spaces and social relations. (cf. Van Maanen 1974) Officer Karsten (retroactively) described one minor incident where a local representative (Orstvorsteher) flagged down his police car to complain about a local resident burning trash in the yard: the family was fairly large, and had "previously" held a good reputation in the community until a dispute over construction and property rights had put them at odds with their neighbors. As a result, problems that would otherwise be handled locally or informally would often involve the police, and Officer Karsten saw his role as more typically institutional, presenting the face of authority, rather than one of representing the community, and that, in this case, the more communicative approach typical of the Revierpolizei might not be effective in light of this bit of local history.

An extended example of this was found as one Revierpolizei officer was being trained on-the-job to take over for a retiring officer. Over the course of a week, I accompanied the two as they visited various key locations, met with officials, and dealt with some minor issues. Practically, the major portion of the work was a semi-formal 'passing of the torch,' as Officer Becker, the retiring officer,

introduced his replacement, Officer Weiss, to various individuals and community partners, both informing them of the change and essentially attempting to provide some legitimacy to the incoming officer: one consistent refrain from officers was that it takes 3 or 4 years to establish both trust and an effective and reliable 'network,' and that help from and the support of a previously trusted officer is invaluable. However, apart from the introductions, the key function of these training shifts was the various descriptions and explanations both before- and after-the-fact inside the squad car. Statements made various places were often generally descriptive but also indicative of norms in some way; for example, Officer Becker described one area of a few small villages with "very calm, nothing ever happens there, but I try to drive by at least once a month." With regard to a different village, Officer Weiss was instructed that he needed to get to know local officials first, because the "they can be fussy… you need to register one year in advance just to have a family party. A key descriptor of most locations was regular or annual events where the Revierpolizei officer would be expected to extend, but the type of reception to be expected varied from places where it was seen more as a "check-up" to others where the officer would be expected to join the celebration ("mitfeiern.") The shared knowledge was less of a step-by-step guide—though some shifts were essentially 'normal days' most were spent attempting to visit as many locations as possible even though most were rarely visited in routine work—and more of a narrative compendium of broad expectations and local norms, cautionary indications (e.g. "watch out with those abandoned buildings, sometimes teenagers are in there.") and key individuals which could be used as a basis to structure future interpretations and guide decision-making: the knowledge itself was a skill, but would need to be accompanied with an understanding of how to perform the work.

6.7 Serious Jokes: Humor and Institutional Frames

> An officer observes a woman standing in the middle of the street. He approaches her and asks, "Are you okay?"
>
> The woman replies, "Yes, but how do I get to the hospital?"
>
> The officer replies, "Just keep standing there."
>
> (POLICE Magazine, October 2018)

Humor has long been recognized as a useful tool (both in its actual usage, as well as in secondary academic analysis) in understanding cultural and institutional frameworks of 'normality' and public definitions of values. (Fine 1984b) Humor, specifically darker or gallows humor, has been found to play a role as a coping mechanism in dealing with stress as well as in establishing a form of subcultural communication. (Horan et al. 2012) Humor allows for the altering of real or hypothetical circumstances to explore, challenge, or subvert common definitions of situations, examine which topics and relationships are overtly or publicly part of interaction-negotiations and which are excluded (e.g. by being considered taboo) or only used through symbolic representations (e.g. in forms of 'deep play' which maintain cultural understood but unstated associations, such as how Hollywood used specific mannerisms to represent gay characters while avoiding censorship or possible moral outrage for openly depicting homosexuality in a non-moralizing way.) "Humor's critical role thus lies in poking a hole through often-undiscussed but official versions of everyday reality, exposing their contradictions and the arbitrary basis of their social power." (Paolucci and Richardson 2006: 334) The use of humor can be seen to resolve a (theoretical) conflict between the adherence to institutional roles as a source of identity and normative ordering and interactional behavior based on generated intersubjective meaning: strict conceptual institutional definitions can be challenged or subverted to create more freedom of movement within the confines of a set institutional role. Externally monolithic or fixed roles, such as the classic depiction of the bureaucrat (Weber 1958), may avoid problematic forms of role strain that affect interactions based on interactions between the role itself and outside 'clients' by maintaining an internal culture which maintains practices based on poking fun at or ridiculing the seriousness of that role. The police serve as an excellent example of this.

Jokes were, unsurprisingly, common in more backstage situations—between other officers in the station, or told to me by officers while in transit. Often these were very simple uses of humor that simply indicated a lack of overt formality in what could otherwise be a business setting, something that could be expected in many workplace settings. For example, when Officer Reiner, as station chief, tells another officer to "come over here!" in an informal and direct way, the response was often "I didn't do anything!" These types of jokes and comments could often escalate: Officer Reiner and Officer Karsten at one point 'argued' over whether to turn up the thermostat or not; when Officer Karsten dramatically made an exaggeratedly threatening face and slammed his fist on the desk Officer Reiner responded (using the formal tense) "I will shoot you!"

Humor can be seen as establishing a form of solidarity by allowing for flexibility in forms of communication and making it clear that, essentially, everyone who is in on the joke is on the same side. (Pogrebin and Poole 1988) The descriptions used by police of people and places—the sharing of local knowledge and linked narratives—often used more humorous, or at least irreverent, wording which both served to undermine the 'neutral formality' of this information and likely also aided in making it more memorable and, therefore, communicable. Rather than using more technical, formalized, and dry, vocabulary, officers more often used either everything speech or slang (e.g. referring to a "guy" ["Typ"] rather than a "man") but very often 'colorful' idioms and stock phrases, whether in referring to someone as a "village idiot," or an officer describing himself as "the village sheriff." These narrative elements often reflected both cultural narratives, often subverted and used ironically, (an officer accepting minor praise from a colleague saying, "Yeah, I'm Superman.") as well as the 'immethologicalness' of common sense presentations. (Geertz 1975) The use of more 'playful' insults in a private context—particularly when simply between the officer and myself—often corresponded to an 'ordering' function through the officer simply attempted to adapt, even if only in his or her own mind, an explanation for the observed juxtaposition of a person, setting, and behavior: for example, on occasions where an officer was passed on the road it commonly resulted in a comment such as "Freche Sau!" (lit: cheeky pig) but no additional action: the internal narrative labeling of a person in a more irreverent way often seemed enough to properly establish a basic sense of order, with the need to 'punish insolence' almost never stated directly and essentially only in contexts referring to more abstract or mass media contexts rather than encountered and known individuals. (In a similar but contrasting situation, an officer pointed out a car behind ours and stated, proudly, "he's too afraid of us to pass.")

Humor served both to distance but to also imply a deeper, more intrinsic (or at least less expressive) communicative level, as it was not always entirely objectively clear when the humor is 'serious' or when it is simply demonstrative or even decorative: an officer describing a not particularly noteworthy or exciting case to a colleague states, "who says nothing exciting ever happens here? Is the joke at the expense of the people involved in the case, the community in general, the abstract structures and conditions of the region (or whatever "here" is), the police organization, the officer himself, or the institutional idea and broader cultural image of the police? It is potentially all and none of these, with the joke being more indicative of a code or a way officers talk that skirts around taking things 'too seriously,' especially in cases like this where any attempt to present the case seriously or as important would likely seem disingenuous or else

just become a failed narrative (as in the presented by Van Hulst 2013, where an officer's story about freeing a sheep from a ditch is met with metaphorical crickets.) At the same time, officers made more serious statements suggesting that they did take even minor cases seriously even if they recognized and openly discussed the disjunction between idealized policing images and the realities of most incidents and community concerns. More everyday and irreverent language was used to transmit knowledge both in storytelling and in updating colleagues on cases, for example warning other officers that involved individuals are unpredictable ("crazy" / "verrückt"), prone to talk back or insult officers ("der hat eine Fresse!" essentially meaning "he has a big mouth"), is a gossip ("der ist so eine Dorf-Oma" lit: "he is a village grandmother") or stands out and is therefore recognizable or well-known in the area ("er ist eher ein bunter Hund" lit: "he's a brightly colored dog"); these and similar expressions were used to essentially give depth to described character but in a way that could relate to or be applied in upcoming encounters, rather than being *purely* performative storytelling, and yet the use of these idioms and descriptors was significantly performative and culturally relevant. Backstage humor in particular seemed to be more about finding a shared outlet as a way to demonstrate that officers could communicate as officers without speaking in institutional vocabulary, and the depictions and expressions they used—though in this case rarely offensive or hostile—were typically of the type that would be neither appropriate nor diplomatically practical in front of more involved individuals (though officer sometimes did talk in this way about members of the community in front of others, though this was more common with 'allied' organizations such as the Ordungsamt and community partners who could be seen as affiliated both personally and organizationally. This may not even suggest that this backstage talk is indicative of the officer's "true" feelings—and the more serious and in-depth narratives tended to suggest the opposite, that the jokes were more often than not simply jokes with little deeper meaning—but rather that officers talked this way to demonstrate a form of cooperation which would suggest that a backstage could exist, particularly relevant considering that officers spent the majority of their time outside of the office and in contact with citizens and were aware that even basic everyday social interactions with no overt policing relevance were still a form of image work. An essential feature of humor's position in communication is deniability (Fine 1984b): the fact that a joke can both be a proposition for belief and critique of institutional reality but also simply a harmless, essentially meaningless comments, means that the communicative offer of that joke is often simply for the audience to understand at the same level of 'seriousness' and establishing a shared, if temporal, identity. The social context of the joke was often simply that it was being told by police officers and

rejected, subverted, or at least poked fun at both the institutional frame and the more generalized, idealized idea of a community frame.

Humor and irreverence are often seen as a way to diffuse the seriousness of risks; this use of humor corresponds well to the generalized value system attributed to most policing cultures, as an overt fixation on what *might* have happened could imply that the officer is overly nervous to the point of unreliability. Making jokes about dangerous or tragic situations can fulfill many of the narrative functions described under 'horror stories,' specifically in presenting 'everyday' (rather than more formal or official) values of policing, such as having a strong stomach or not being easily offended. Though rarely observed in the field research, the use of offensive or derogatory terms for offender and even victims has a long history in the ethnographic literature—the strongest examples from Falkenmark included residents in one village who had reported gasoline theft who were described by one officer as "idiots who probably all just stole from one another until one dropped the canister," but humor at the expense of victims was still limited to minor non-violent incidents. In other cases, narratives about dangerous situations can be presented sarcastically or humorously to emphasize a consequences of failure mechanism, essentially as a way both to downplay, rather than dwell on, the risk but also to emphasize how things could have (and possibly even *should have*) gone worse for whatever reason. Pogrebin and Poole (1988) describe a situation where an officer found himself in a standoff with a man, both of them armed with shotguns; the arrival of backup ended the standoff peacefully, but afterwards one officer commented:

> "It's a good thing Wayne didn't have to shoot that scumbag, because we haven't qualified with the shotgun for I don't know how long. He would have shot and probably hit the front window, and that son of a bitch would've opened up on us." (198)

The role of humor to establish situational or personal roles was more prominent and has been less often discussed in the literature. The use of humor by police has typically focused on backstage presentations and just-between-us interactions, but in the current study a great deal of humor was expressed within police-citizen encounters. The 'serious' nature of the abstract police role can often prove absurd when put in a context where police-issues are seen as either rare or often petty and 'everyone knows everyone.' Subverting this role through humor can both further establish the officer individually and clarify the current situation as relaxed rather than one of control. This was observed in a variety of situations where its use could theoretically be explained as a way to avoid friction between police and residents.

For example, while responding to a call to an accident or potential hit-and-run at a restaurant and event venue, the officer recognized the owner walking through the parking lot (in the direction away from the car.) Pulling up alongside him, he quickly turned on the lights and sirens and yelled (using the informal pronoun), “You! Stop! You’re under arrest!” While coming as a surprise to the owner, this essentially served as nothing more than a greeting, but one establishing a more friendly relationship, which first lead to basic greetings and small talk before moving on to the obvious reason for the interaction—that the owner had requested the presence of a police officer. Other subtler examples occurred when officer visited individuals known to them privately in uniform (including one visit to deliver a birthday card to the former chief) where officers would knock on the door and then loudly declare “Police! Open the door!” with the assumption that the resident would immediately recognize it as sarcastic rather than serious.

Humor was similarly used by citizens both in this more ‘extreme’ form of situational mismatch (i.e. citizens approaching a known officer and saying “Oh no it’s the cops!”) and in more general irreverent or idiomatic descriptions of events or within small talk: both uses are here considered overt practices for establishing situational or personal authority, with the primary difference being the existing relationship and whether the topics being joked about are ‘police-related’ or more general. In only a few examples were humorous overtures by citizens ‘rejected’ by police, and in those cases this rejection was expressed more by ignoring the statement and moving in with the conversation rather than pointing out the disparity (a situation often depicted in popular culture but also occasionally described in the ethnographic literature.) The use of humor as an ‘ice breaker’ or as a gauge of the type of encounter being entered into was among the best indicators of how the institutional role of the police was perceived (specifically as ‘serious’ and ‘humorless’) and one of the clearest and more direct practices for establishing, or attempting to establish, a situational or personal relationship are dominant within that encounter. Humor both served as a justification for initiating an encounter—allowing for ‘institutionally-relevant’ information to be later introduced without sacrificing the illusion of a more cooperative or friendly relationship—and as a test of how an encounter could or would proceed, essentially asking “am I in trouble?” While small talk could also fulfill these functions, humor in its presentation was a more overt challenge to the strict institutional role, and often was used within small talk even in the choice of vocabulary and minor ‘emotional displays’ to further distance a more bureaucratic perspective: phrasing and wording that at least appears to be unsuitable for a wider audience suggests a level of trust and, at least within the situation, a mutual insider status. This was key not just for managing encounters but also for establishing trust in the long term.

The two significant uses of humor—within policing backstage settings and within citizen encounters—were seen as both expressive (as 'realistic' statements that may not have a strict, functional use but simply belong to a moment, lacking in a deeper 'method') and instrumental (in establishing and identifying relationships and power structures guiding the immediate situation.) Most notable in the context of the Revierpolizei in Falkenmark is the setting for jokes and irreverent talk—officers, especially country officers, had a more limited arena for 'canteen culture' performance, and this is seen as relating both to the extensive breaking of institutional norms and distancing from an institutional role in public encounters as well as to the systemic use of sarcastic quips or 'one-liners' within a more institutional context (i.e. within the station, in contact with other officers) as the opportunities to establish and maintain a mutual and shared policing culture are reduced compared to a more structured unit or type of police work. The relative lack of broader, simple policing values which lend themselves to 'tellable' narratives—e.g. crime fighter war stories or gory horror stories—in place of more nuanced, community-bound understandings of the role of the police alters the manner as well as function of storytelling in the police in this context. The stories—including jokes, anecdotes and parables—that police tell reflect both their knowledge of community but also demonstrate a shared commitment that might not be more easily expressible.

6.8 Policing Cultures or Cultures within Policing?

Shearing and Ericson (1991) write that:

> In studying policing, sociologists have examined the fit between legal rules, viewed as instructions, and police decisions. Typically they report that police officers deviate from these legal instructions. Instead of using these findings to question the assumptions of the rule-based paradigm, however, they have accepted as axiomatic the belief that all action is rule-generated and concluded that there must be some other set of rules that is generating police action. (483)

The Revierpolizei pose an interesting challenge to discussions of police culture(s). The mandate and basic idea of their work within the institution essentially undermines the rigidity of the institutional culture and encourages both the adaption or at least consideration of outside / community perspectives and the deference to alternative, often informal, forms of social control. The goals of the unit are essentially to avoid developing the type of insulated culture that has often been attributed to police in the professionalism era. The institutional rules guiding

police work, as Shearing and Ericson state, simply do not for the most part and instead perform other functions. Similarly, the function of the institutional perspective for most observed Revierpolizei encounters was to exist as a possible that was rarely selected or invoked in its full form (an analogy here could potentially be that the purpose of a police firearm is to not have to be fired.) Police powers and authority are drawn broader, stronger, and more unassailable than are actually required in most situations, but this is not to imply—as the law might—that police should either deal with *every* situation fitting within a ‘police-relevant’ typology (or even every case coming to their attention) nor that every case should be dealt with in the strictest and most severe terms. Discretion, it has long been observed, is the understated but necessary glue that holds the conceptual criminal justice system together; culture has often been considered one of the key drivers of that discretion in that it simply provides a framework for police officers to decide which things are important (or at least narratively justify their decisions in front of an audience of their peers.)

Funke (1990) provides a typology of four influential factors for the organization of police activity and decision-making at an individual level.

1) The officer’s social situation (including their private, social contacts, their educational level and close/familiar relationships)
2) Official requirements for their actions
3) Their occupational contacts with their “clientele” and
4) Their personal, psychological cognitive mechanisms of experienced social reality (41, own translation)

This typology suggests a more diverse view of the sources of police decision-making than simply positing “culture vs. institution”; this model, however, lacks the central elements of police culture considered relevant, namely the construction (and celebration) of values and the sharing of stories of accomplishments which can serve as a model for future action or simply become part of a visible and imaginary culture. (cf. Waddington 1999) At the same time, these conceptualizations of police culture tend to presume a separation of police—physically and socially—from the social space of their work, and that the arenas of policing culture can exist solely for that function. In the present case, both the social situation and occupational contacts were influential not only in establishing conceptualizations or cultural narratives but immanently by often overlapping. The social situation of the officer was often the occupational situation; occupational contact was with those not far removed from known social circles. The ‘personal, psychological cognitive mechanisms’ may not necessarily have differed

greatly from that of any other residents (or at least this was the impression conveyed by words, if not always action.) Encounters between police and citizens were less driven by rule than by loose rituals and by everyday norms—in some cases the desired outcome was immediately clear (at least from the perspective of the officer) and actions were performed in such a way as to lead to that inevitable conclusion, in others the officers adapted to changes and essentially took on new roles in the course of encounters, raising or lowering their guards, changing demeanor, etc. (cf. Behr 2000b) The broader culture of the police may provide a vocabulary for identifying ideal outcomes (in consideration of institutional demands and pressures) but primarily seems to be an outlet for expressing, sharing, and dramatizing the various understandings and expectations which more immediately guide how situated events are realized.

The function of police culture may have been less visible or reducible to a simplistic typology: officer decision making was only loosely related to specific institutional concerns (at least, without considering that institutional concerns in this case seemed to emphasize the discretionary power of the Revierpolizei) but was also mediated or at least related to understandings of community norms and expectations rather than directly governed by subcultural policing values. Indeed, the stated values of the police tended to emphasis this, with the more 'demonstrative' aspects of police interactions (teaching lessons and punishing resistance or the questioning of authority) not particularly evident in the narratives shared by police in the office, on patrol, with citizens, and off-duty. Generally, the function of police culture did not appear to be to establish set practices or offer examples of ideal practices, though the extent to which the culture could be considered *functional* depends especially on how strictly culture and work are separated. The broader cultural aspects of the Revierpolizei occupational culture, unsurprisingly, valued the type of work done by the Revierpolizei and the more unique characteristics of that work, including involvement in the community and the ability to make decisions without overt reliance on official guidelines: this also reflected the general trends in the literature suggesting less conservative / authoritarian attitudes among older and rural officers (cf. Paoline 2003, Dübbers 2015) The vocabularies and narratives of Revierpolizei officers saw their work as important and valuable in the same way that officers performing other tasks tend to value the work they are intended (or believe themselves) to do, yet were variable enough and visible enough in the actual implementation of police work to be convincing, especially when comparing the narratives of those who had spent entire careers in community-oriented work and those who had only come to it after years of experience in patrol or investigative units: officers valued

the general slow pace of the work (when compared to the idealized emergency-to-emergency pace and general unpredictability of patrol / response work) but also the regularity of the work (both in scheduling and in predictability) and the ability to interact with others in a more informal manner in situations not driven by immediate policing exigencies.

The more overtly dramaturgical aspects of police culture—the “canteen culture” and the more exaggerated performances—were for the most part similar to that described in the general and international literature: police told war stories and horror stories mostly simply because they were entertaining but also including lessons. The lessons told, however, were more often cautionary than prescriptive—relevant to the idea of police valuing ‘cleverness’ over ‘raw power’ or even ‘common sense’ over ‘theory’ is the fact that narratives emphasizing these values will display a variety of situational different approaches, and what is clever in what situation, if accepted as proper procedure, will rarely be clever in all other cases. In the same way, positive outcomes were less clear and definable—e.g. arrests or closed cases were never presented by officers as a sign of individual success—while negative outcomes were often negative both from an institutional perspective as well from a more general cultural frame: injuries or death were almost exclusively presented—at least within local or first-hand accounts—as negative outcomes regardless of the victim.

However, the occupational culture of the Revierpolizei was more visible in the everyday work and cooperation between officers (both Revierpolizei officers and those from other units.) The strict separation between “canteen culture” presentations and storytelling and routine encounters was only sustained to the extent that dramatic storytelling took place in “backstage arenas,” that is, the backstage elements of the social space were constructed as ‘backstage’ but the presentation happening was performative and generally unrelated to current or routine work and—invocations of police values aside—primarily functional and demonstrative in that stories were being told among police officers. These situations were rarely confined to the Revierpolizei and involved not only officers from other units but depending on the arena also involved Ordnungsamt employees or retired officers; for example, in one Polizeirevier, the break room tended to be used by two or three Revierpolizei officers and two or three station personnel with varying experience, in another station the breakroom was rarely visited for longer breaks as most officers ate lunch at a nearby public cafeteria, and another contained a similar public canteen-style restaurant specifically called a “police canteen” but also frequented by a wider assortment of residents. Revierpolizei officers for the most part spent less time in the station or around larger groups of officers—only the

city officers routinely spent time in break rooms or these canteens, with country officers either having private spaces (kitchenettes or simply coffee machines, kettles etc.) inside their offices or routinely visiting cafes or canteen style restaurants for lunch (usually though not always as the only uniformed officer.) Overall, officers had limited opportunity to specifically share stories and experiences with other officers outside of 'work-related' encounters, at least when compared to their encounters with citizens or community partners—the manner, content, and frequency of policing narratives shared by officers with non-police varied from officer to officer, though this was a significant enough practice to challenge the singularly of "police culture" within the context of the Revierpolizei, suggesting instead that the officers had a police-ish frame of reference and authoritative narratorial perspective but the telling of the stories did not establish an enclosed police-specific culture. The police occupational culture was more widely seen in the use of everyday irreverence and the use of vocabulary (informally, rather than institutionally driven) while conveying institutionally-relevant or institutionally-necessary information. These types of routine interactions essentially emphasized the message of most canteen horror stories: that police officers need to know what to take seriously and talk about seriously but, more importantly, what to take seriously but talk about *unseriously*. Yet even this language rarely demonstrated a clear break from 'frontstage' work: the attitudes and vocabularies used here were often seen in cases assessed as appeals to situational or personal authority, such as situations where even if the police invoked the concept of force or violence the audience would not regard it as a serious threat but rather as a joke at the expense of normative images of policing and/or confirmation that the audience was involved in a more personal non-confrontational interaction.

The Revierpolizei demonstrate more a broader culture within policing than a strict policing culture. The perceived rise of an aggressive, masculine policing culture in Germany in particular is attributed with a stronger reliance on the institution frame of policing. (cf. Behr 2000, 2018) The fact that officers cannot effectively simply 'follow the guidelines' to conduct their work and make decisions and yet need to be presented in a way in which they do exactly this suggests that role strain and shifting typologies of people and social space play a significant role in how policing is constructed by officers. Following a pure institutional model leaves little leeway for outside perspectives and removes any aspects of 'negotiation' from policing encounters, at the most extreme contradicting the concept of democratic policing. Yet the common realization among officers that decisions must be made and priorities must be set raises questions of how this is done. The police culture has been claimed to act as a 'blue line' both guiding officers in navigating the 'office politics' of institutional demands

but also in separating them from outside criticism embodies in the simple existence of contrary viewpoints outside of the policing occupation and institution. Community-oriented policing has argued for replacing this with the setting of priorities based on 'community concern' though only vaguely defined what form this could take or how it could be accomplished in light of changes not only in the 'dominant police culture' but in mainstream, mediatized and common cultural images of the police. The policing culture of the Revierpolizei is lacking in coherent borders—the narratives, goals, and values expressed by officers are often shared with other community members, secrets and information (as forms of social capital, necessarily data, or simply entertainment) are shared with some known individuals or community partners but hidden through omission in some cases even from the police organization. Many expressions of police culture were essentially ritual, doings things because they are done, but also establishing "a story they tell themselves about themselves." (Geertz 1973: 448) The ways the officers talked about their work was in many ways simply talk, expressing frustration, performing boundary maintenance, simply 'being a cop' etc. (cf. Waddington 1999) but in many more ways these narratives were the work. The officers of the Revierpolizei could not exist in a world consisting solely of 'the institution' and 'the outside,' struggling to find a safe space to hide their identities from both, but instead need to be able to work within a living community. The ways in which police construct their communities—with words and action—are not simply cognitive processes or labeling, but bear larger meanings even beyond the symbolic in establishing the reality of those who might also claim those communities for themselves.

7 The Police and Community Maintenance

7.1 Knowing the Police / Knowing the Community

> "What is true of people generally is true of the police as well."—Egon Bittner (1974)

Police work, as described in the research literature, as well as popular culture, media depictions, and within the war stories, jokes, and anecdotes of the occupational culture of policing—is full of contradictions. The mandate of the police to enforce the law has long been identified as superficial at best, and generally undesirable as a priority, with law enforcement instead serving as a capability which serves the greater function of order-maintenance or peacekeeping. Bittner (1974) asks:

> [W]hy can the police mandate not be conceived as embodying the law enforcement mandate inherent in criminal law enforcement? The answer is quite simple. Regardless of how strenuously criminal law enforcement is emphasized in the image of the policeman and in police administration, and regardless of how important police work might actually be for keeping the administration of criminal justice in business, the activity of criminal law enforcement is not at all characteristic of day-to-day, ordinary occupational practices of the vastly preponderant majority of policemen. In other words, when one looks at what policemen actually do, one finds that criminal law enforcement is something that most of them do with a frequency locate somewhere between virtually never and very rarely. (156–157)

The role of law enforcement in policing is therefore considered one of high significance in terms of image and domain in terms of taking ownership of problem and resources. In terms of practices and interactions, however, law enforcement is often seen as being in contrast with an order-maintenance or peacekeeping

A. Bielejewski, *Holding down the Fort*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-39773-9_7

perspective precisely because each invokes differing legitimacies and values that in turn invoke vastly different political philosophies. Skolnick (1971) writes:

> The phrase "law and order" is misleading because it draws attention away from the substantial incompatibilities existing between the two ideas… "Law and order" are frequently found to be in opposition, because law implies rational restraint upon the rules and procedures utilized to achieve order. Order under law, therefore, subordinates the ideal of conformity to the ideal of legality. The actual requirement of maintaining social order under the principles of legality places an unceasing burden upon the police as a social institution. Indeed, the police is *the* institution best exemplifying the strain between the two ideas. (9)

Fassin (2013), after observing French police actively researching obscure ordinances as a way to 'throw the book' at darker-skinned youth while letting 'Europeans' off with a warning, describes the law as primarily a legitimation for desired outcomes rather than an end in itself:

> The law generally functions to give an acceptable form to decisions taken in line with a certain vision of order in the social world; on the other [hand], the law is applied unequally to different individuals in such a way as to maintain a specific social order. (84)

By this reading, the discretion inherent to police work is not simply a kink in the system unable to be worked out, but the very mechanism that allows that system to work, and the disparity in the treatment between individuals and groups is less an unfortunate outcome and more the point. This unequal treatment demonstrates the construction of 'insiders' and 'outsiders,' painfully conspicuous in this case of the French police (see also de Maillard et al. 2016 for a similar account) where police officers viewed almost all members of a certain social / demographic group as morally equivalent, regardless of observations or experiences: the police rarely invoked the form of situational authority often observed in Falkenmark, as they rarely actively conceptualized those they encountered as individuals with a past and future, but simply as a series of individual problems to be dealt with. The French police often described individuals as deserving punishment for "showing off," which Fassin found to have little relation to observed behavior apart from minority youth simply existing in a place and time. Even cases where nothing was 'suspicious' were at times seen as provocative by the police for being a waste of time, with officers often expressing their desire or plan to 'provoke' individuals into insulting or assaulting them as a reason to "put them away." Though Fassin's examples are extreme when compared to the slow-paced and

relaxed realities of Revierpolizei work, what they share in common is the use of outside (i.e. non-legal) standards of acceptable behavior which is not universal but rather situated and differentiated by the perceived status and 'belonging-ness' of individuals. The police enforce order and sometimes in doing so also enforce the law.

The resultant emphasis on order-maintenance then raises the question of how order is defined and maintained, assuming there are no formal rules to be followed in terms of what should be allowed, and who, essentially, determines the boundaries of conflict. (Christie 1977) This has led to a variety of different approaches to the police looking for (and inevitably finding) the source of policing behaviors in structures ranging from the occupational policing culture (Chan 2004), local community coalitions or politics (Wilson 1968, Kelling and Coles 1996) or the base and superstructure of modern capitalism. (Spitzer and Scull 1977 cf. Garland 2001) Even as policing research accelerates in the direction of policy evaluation and efficiency improvements *for* policing, a general consensus is still lacking in terms of how to conceptually and analytically discuss *what police do.*[1]

Bittner (1967), in his study of police on skid row, illustrates the problem of attempting to understand police behavior from a purely institutional or criminological perspective:

> The prevailing method of carrying out the task [of containment] is to assign patrolmen to the area on a fairly permanent basis and to allow them to work out their own way of running things. External influence is confined largely to the supply of support and facilities, on the one hand, and to occasional expressions of criticism about the overall conditions, on the other. Within the limits of available resources and general expectations, patrolmen are supposed to know what to do and are free to do it. (704)

Bittner's further analysis emphasizes the practical ways police handle the types of situations which (to them) present themselves as problems; he notably frames this analysis as how police respond to the *demand conditions* of a unique and specific setting, implying that different (perceived) structural contingencies will

[1] A recent example of the split in understandings of the police (largely visible through, if not the result of, methodological differences) can be found in the public reaction to Alice Goffman's (2014) *On the Run* and the previous related dissertation. In particular, her claim to have been told by police officers that they use hospital records as a way to track individuals with outstanding warrants—in opposition to both police and hospital policy—was used as proof of 'fabrication.' Apparently, a significant number of sociologists (primarily engaged in quantitative data analysis) are utterly unfamiliar with any of the ethnographic policing literature and unable to reconcile the official statement of policy and observations of that policy being violated without finding a foundation to discredit ethnographic work broadly. (Parry 2015)

provide different sets of possible practices. (cf. Huey 2007) A recurring issue here is the (inevitable) generalizing of findings about the police: the police continue to be treated as a relatively fixed organization, even globally, with a fixed system of values or at most hinging on a few modifiable variables. (Bernard et al. 2005, cf. Mawby 1991) This is complicated by the fact that there must be some universal elements worth examining to make the police *institutionally* interesting and to make the sociological study of policing more than advocacy. Peter Manning's (2012, 2013, see also Brodeur 2007) recurring criticism is that the concepts and frames introduced by Bittner have become widely adopted as a basic theoretical frame but stripped of their critical approach: the police are not unique or interesting because they have a "monopoly on the use of force," but rather because of how they, as an institution made up of individual actors, manage their roles, appearances, and actions to conduct work based on some level on coercion without giving up appearances of legal norms, democratic considerations, negotiation, or community norms and standards. Bittner's is "not a theory of the nature and function of the police organization. Rather, it is a conceptually-grounded rendering of the situated nature of police work and its rationale within the organization." (Manning 2012: 174)

A sociology of policing therefore must take this situated nature as a starting point and not merely as a singular variable—there are at least as many varieties of police work as there are police organizations, even more when considering the variation in how that work is conducted over time, place, and by changing personnel (both in the sense of turnover and new hiring as well as in personal changes in how officers experience and conduct their work.) Even in his discussion of how police view the residents of skid row and frame their practices around those understandings, Bittner (1967) notes that, "in practice, the restriction of interactional possibilities that is based on the patrolman's stereotyped conception of skid-row residents is always subject to revision and modification towards certain individuals. Thus, it is entirely possible, and not unusual, for patrolmen to view certain skid-row inhabitants in terms that involve non-skid-row aspects of normality." (705) Even within specific demand conditions and expectations of individuals, police practices can vary significantly from case to case and individual to individual, with authority being constructed differently, the potential for coercive force being presented (or hidden) in various ways, and understanding of what is best for 'the community' varying based on how the officer presents the individual in the specific encounter apart from an *ideal type* or stereotyped role-burdened social actor. At the same time, situated actions follow existing forms and expectations and attempts are made to reconcile them, in word and in deed, to desired pre-categorized outcomes—the complexity of police interactions

should caution us against accepting one particular frame as the correct perspective, but should not dissuade us from attempting to read the deeper meanings and perceptions of structure which guide those interactions.

The practices of policing discussed in the previous chapters are best considered *possible* forms of interaction between police and citizens or forms of meaning that can be effectively established and communicated which are often used by police in the area and organization of study because of their (perceived) effectiveness in light of the various factors and considerations which facilitate, hinder, or otherwise affect authority-based communication and the presentation of (coercive and social) power which is the basis of the policing of public life on a case-by-case basis. That is, police officers themselves hold varied and conflicting views of police work: in a narrative sense they often compare their own decisions or actions to an ideal type routine or expectation, making a contrast based on specific cited factors, in this case commonly based around the rural or small-town character of the area or pre-existing relationships with those involved. But this should not be taken to assume that there is a specific ideal type for police work—the fact that policing occupational cultures and (in some respects) the policing institution and mandate can emphasize 'clever' decision-making and problem-solving suggests that officers can present themselves in a more favorable light, as well as establish a more durable and robust self-image (of themselves as police officers and of *the police* as a concept) by emphasizing the variations in how the work is done and the need to first select skills and knowledge from a variety of sources and then usefully apply them to unique situations.

The use of the rhetorical 'normal' in these cases serves the purpose of grounding a generic baseline for police work to establish that there is some commonality in terms of goals and perspectives, but not to imply that this baseline sets out the correct or proper response to any of the types of situations that police are expected to handle. (cf. Sudnow 1965) As Bittner (1970) suggests, the rhetorical norm is more often invoked when making an exception to a purported rule than as a guide for actually making decisions. The use of phrases such as "Most cops would do this…. But I sometimes do this…" in this way demonstrates both a consistency in policing values as well as a flexibility in how those values can be presented. Among the most prominent examples along this vein observed among the Revierpolizei in Brandenburg were the cases of officers who either preferred not to carry a weapon or downplayed the usefulness of firearm proficiency in everyday work. These officers maintained a stated goal of public safety, and instead framed the presence of a firearm—even in the possession of a police officer—as more likely to lead to greater harm, impede efforts to establish rapport

or be friendly, and rarely be necessary even at a symbolic level.[2] This rhetorical break from the normal or ideal type could take place at many levels, but the most relevant was likely that which generally referred to the region—either as a direct *linked* connection or by emphasizing its rural character or some related aspects, e.g. "it's quieter here than in the bigger cities." This provided a broad-stroke identity which allowed for different forms of generalizations; a simple urban—rural divide is not tenable or theoretically helpful, considering that the region still had a significant diversity in terms of settings, with a mix of smaller cities and towns, villages ranging from only a few houses to several dozen, farmland with houses few and far between, and woods or less-developed 'wilderness' areas. This categorization of the area as purely "rural" (both in its invocation by police and by myself reflexively) speaks to the assumption of specific unique factors *assumed* to be related to the conditions of the area that affect police work in fundamental ways. While a significant amount of policing still occurred in urban areas against backdrops that would not seem to fit a "rural" characterization and in terms of appearance were rarely easily distinguishable from most parts of Germany, the organization of policing—as well as its implementation—needed to consider the significant sparsely populated areas that needed to be covered, the generally low rate of crime or calls for service, the strength and breadth of private interpersonal networks, the importance of certain activities of greater relevance (i.e. hunting and the higher rate of firearm possession compared to most of Germany), the generally older population (including among the police), and the problems and risks associated with automobiles in less populated areas. This means that the police—individually and institutionally—take on a new level of expertise, not only in possessing the skills necessary for the various tasks, but in identifying which types of skills are needed in which situations in light of the situated nature of their work. Several officers declared their preference for the region (specifically or as a type) with statements including "The city is not for me," but the specific reasoning they gave and how they presented the rural—urban divide rhetorically varied from case to case—though these presentations were generally consistent and tended to emphasize the current familiarity which officers had with the area and the community, also including statements such as

[2] It is important to note here that this view was not openly expressed by every officer, and the major point here is that there was a great diversity in how police work both as ideal and as routine was presented. In many cases, however, the specific tactics or strategies described were presented in direct contrast to what "many" or "most" would do in similar cases, and rarely were these contrasts overtly presented as criticisms of what others would do but rather more as a way to show reflexivity and establish a familiarity with *other* practices than what one generally uses.

"the people around here mostly like us." These distinctions between the character of the local area and the generalized 'standard' was however most relevant not for the specific characterizations as much as for its significant implication that the police were aware of, and acted in accordance with their understanding of, the 'reality' of everyday community routines, expectations, norms, demands, histories, and social relations. The police often present themselves as experts not only at *doing things*, but more often—in the present case, at least—they presented themselves as experts at *knowing their community*.

Knowing the community refers here to both expectations of the types of risks and problems that are routine and common, as well as anticipating them, and also the expectation of what is normal in terms of demand conditions, what types of behaviors are more or less tolerated, how citizens are expected to reaction, and what priorities anticipated risks and problems should have. It essentially means establishing a concept of *routine work* which can be used as a guideline for decision making and at the same time embed the use of police discretion within 'expertise' or 'knowledge.' (Behr 2006) The police identify their situation and setting in a way that allows them to demonstrate some control or understanding over it—reflected in the extent to which institutional authority is relied on or how situational authority is developed, in how conflicts are negotiated, and in how problems are framed at various levels and temporal points ranging from the reporting of the problem or call for service, to the decision of the police to intervene in a certain way (e.g. sending a patrol car with flashing lights and sirens or planning for a Revierpolizei officer to arrive at some point during the next day or two), how police narratively frame the problem in engaging with those involved or bystanders, how official reports are constructed, and how the event is later discussed by officers informally. Understanding the community does not necessarily mean that police internalize or adapt pre-existing understandings or values from within that community however; Kurtz and Upton (2017) note that, "a departmental narrative can substantially differ from the broader community and may simultaneously assist, and yet reject, the community it serves." (543) The narratives of organizations, institutions, and communities are not fixed or 'falsifiable' but are rather constantly in flux, often existing in parallel or in contrast, and are most visible and 'real' when applied to situations with identifiable outcomes, e.g. police decision-making and justifications. Officers intervening against certain types of behavior on the basis of its unsuitability to a time or space are proposing a narrative of that time / space which may conflict with or support existing narratives; at this level, police work is not simply gaining and applying knowledge of a social space but also of actively constructing it through speech and action.

7.2 Constructing the Community

While primarily cited in terms of police micro-interactions, Egon Bittner viewed his work as an attempt to set the police within situated social contexts. He viewed the police as existing with a role and mandate to organize (urban) societies which already maintained varying, sometimes competing, systems of organization. The role of the state—in this context, specifically, though not exclusively, the police—is "creating conditions for the orderly coexistence of strangers." (Brodeur 2007: 111) 20th century developments in policing—particularly in the US context though highly relevant to Germany and Europe generally—have essentially viewed the acknowledgement of pre-existing systems of community as antithetical to the operation of the police, and varyingly attempted to centralize or sequester the police to shield them from corrupting influences and to decentralize them to legitimate the policing institution apart from the larger political apparatus of government. (Walker 1993, De Lint 2000, cf. Elias 1988) Yet the practical realities of policing have rarely, if ever, worked this way, with police needing to respect or at least recognize the extant community structures, politics, trends, and transformations, and this has been especially true for remote, rural, and small town policing. (cf. Banton 1964, Young 1993) The institution of policing and "the political legitimacy of the police under liberal democracies has also depended upon the careful structuring and balancing of state jurisdiction, community representation, and expert knowledge." (De Lint 2000: 57) Community representation and expert knowledge are both concepts which require further presentation to effectively support the legitimacy of policing: which community is being represented? Is this representation purely symbolic or does it imply some degree of participation? Is expert knowledge confined to the realm of criminal enforcement, or does it rely to the proper understanding of how to handle situations with respect to community concerns, civil and human rights, etc.? Rather than supplanting the structures and systems of norms, values, and symbols that make of communities and segments of society, the police through their immediate actions and image work at various levels offer their own constructions of 'legitimate society.'

A few excellent examples demonstrate specific ways in which police *construct* their communities in terms of perception but also practices. Bittner (1967) describes at length what the residents of Skid Row are to the police, which assumptions are made prior to any contact and which assumptions can be made within an interaction based on actions and statements. Among the key criteria that govern how police approach their tasks is the assumption of 'reduced visibility,' that individuals can essentially disappear. The public nature of street life

reinforces the need for increased visibility, and the transitory nature of 'skid row identity' makes framing and predictive long-term consequences for social action difficult from the perspective of the police:

> Just as the past is seen by the policeman as having only the most attenuated relevance to the present, so the future implications of present situations are said to be generally devoid of prospective coherence. No venture, especially no joint venture, can be said to have a strongly predictable future in line with its initial objectives. It is a matter of adventitious circumstance whether or not matters go as anticipated. That which is not within the grasp of momentary control is outside of practical social reality. (Bittner 1967: 705)

Bittner's understanding of how police view the exigencies of the situations they encounter lies on a spectrum, distantly separated from the situations in many small-town or suburban police departments that have subsequently become the subject of sociological analysis (cf. Wilson 1968) and the case of the Revier-polizei in Brandenburg specifically. Bittner's skid row police need to become masters of immediate problem solving, relying on crafting and communicating a version of institutional authority and public visibility which can help them maintain order in a social setting which they themselves perceive as disordered, chaotic, and only predictable to the extent that more problems are expected (compare the 'high risk' units in South African townships observed by Marks 2004 or the French 'anti-crime' units described in Fassin 2013.) In this situation there is essentially only one opportunity to 'successfully' resolve a conflict or defuse a potentially explosive situation, and little direct feedback in terms of what consequences or outcomes result. Kelling and Coles (1996) present this as a key characteristic of the "old model" (i.e. pre-community-oriented policing) of policing:

> The old model of policing dealt with incidents. A chronic neighborhood quarrel erupts: police respond. It erupts again: police again respond. And so on. In practical terms for police, incidents have neither a history nor a future. Consistent with their reactive, unintrusive model, police are to refrain from taking action until an incident erupts. (163)

This reading of a policing perspective on 'incidents' is rhetorical, framed as part of an argument for community policing, rather than based in observation: Kelling was well aware of Bittner's observation that most police work is order-maintenance rather than law enforcement, and so his claims that police blindly follow law enforcement models and require an institutional acceptance of order

maintenance as a *legitimate* goal and practice should not be taken too literally. Kelling himself claimed to develop his understanding of community policing based on participant-observation of police officers and examining *what they really did.* His argument should be read more as one attempting to change the broader institutional and cultural values surrounding policing to accept this view, with the (arguably overly optimistic, cf. Waldeck 1999, Harcourt 2001) assumption that these practices can then be refined, improved, and make police work both more transparent and at the same time more palatable for a wider swathe of society. Kelling's reading of police work overemphasizes the use of formal outcomes—arrests, crime reduction—which imply that law enforcement is the primary (if not sole) institutional concern and therefore the primary concern of officers; this overlooks the fact that how officers handle cases at the individual and situational level is almost certainly predicated on their reading of the situation not only as a localized 'incident' but in terms of the likelihood of it leading to future problems they will have to deal with: "Thus, if a police department has fifteen repeat calls to an apartment building over a period of several weeks, the obvious question in a problem-oriented department is 'why wait for the next call and the possibility that someone is going to be seriously hurt?'" (Kelling and Coles 1996: 163) Braga (2015) writes, "[b]ehind every recurring problem there are underlying conditions that create it. Incident-driven policing never addresses these conditions, therefore, incidents are likely to recur." (18, cited in Sparrow 2016: 121) Yet it has often been found through ethnographic research that police officers, regardless of official policy, administrative concerns, or institutional goals, think exactly this way. (Niederhoffer 1967, Rubinstein 1973, Reuss-Ianni 1984; Meehan [1992] notably titled his work, quoting a patrol officer, "I don't prevent crime, I prevent calls" reflecting a deeper understanding of the relationship between crime as a construct and problems reflected in things police have to deal with, but certainly not a pre-occupation with law enforcement as a goal in its own right.) The contextual emphasis or de-emphasis on certain forms of institutional outcomes—i.e. seeing certain forms of police 'activity,' such as vice arrests (Rubinstein 1973) or even traffic tickets (Van Maanen 1974) as a measure of effectiveness—has much to do with constructions of the neighborhood and community (see also Herbert 1996, Moskos 2008b); De Lint (2000) comments that, "in societies like the United States, many sites are already pre-packaged for policing according to the respectability of their constituencies." (76) Patterns and structures of daily life can be recontextualized or reframed through the lens of policing to be 'suspicious' or evidence of disorder, with the Broken Windows claim to be supporting 'community concerns' rarely being effectively challenged to produce evidence of widespread concern within the community being policed. Police can claim to be

serving a community by enforcing laws and regulations which bear little resemblance to “the code of the street,” (Anderson 1999) precisely because their key audience might lie outside of that community. At the same time, a significant body of evidence suggests that police officers often take institutional concerns with a grain of salt and are usually content to simply satisfy the minimum requirements to keep supervisors satisfied. (Banton 1964, Skolnick 1971, Manning 1977, Schubert 1979, Ericson 1982, Rowe 2007, Moskos 2008a) Simply realizing that handling incidents using institutional and bureaucratic categorizations does not solve the ‘root causes’ does not mean that police necessarily have the capacity, resources, knowledge, ability, or even political backing to address these root causes (much less identify them) in a way that is received with widespread acceptance. Community policing, for this reason, has also at times emphasized the appearances of concern and addressing fear of crime and images of disorder regardless of their relationship to reported crime. The question becomes: on which stage is police work being performed? Is the nature and function of policing—the institutional role—being negotiated in communication with members of the community (and, specifically, which members?), being superficially acted out by rote for the benefit of the powers that be, or being played with at various levels to satisfy, entertain, and maintain the members of the cultural field of policing and their supporters and adherents (increasingly visible through the turn of individual police officers to ‘pro police’ social media outlets, cf. Goldsmith 2015)?

The situation in Brandenburg and the case at hand, in any event, prevented a stark contrast to the ‘incident-based’ model. Cases were clearly interpreted by police as embedded within society and networks of personal relationships: even if this wasn’t immediately apparent within the interaction (i.e. in cases where institutional authority was dominant and the officer maintained or was unable to break out of a generic and formalized ‘police role’) officers regularly explained the situation against a broader backdrop, to me or to other officers, pre- or post-encounter, with additional background information relating to specific stories, neighborhoods, problems, or recurring incidents.

One story was recounted to me while riding with a Revierpolizei officer, apparently prompted simply because it happened nearby. An older woman, who lived alone, had on several occasions become confused and mistakenly entered her neighbors’ house and sat down to watch television. She did not cause any damage and was cooperative once she was discovered by the homeowners. The Revierpolizei had been contacted, not so much for the coercive ability to remove the woman—the neighbors were capable of taking the woman home—but because in this case it seemed like the problem might be more significant than just the immediate incident, and that some following up may be required. The story was

concluded with two statements setting out essentially what could be learned from this anecdote. The first linked the story to the local area, emphasizing that this story reflects the simple fact that people often leave their doors unlocked and "don't panic if the neighbors come in." The second was a linking narrative connecting this situation to stereotypes of institutional policing: "if we had treated this situation like a break in, someone could have gotten hurt." Bittner (1970) emphasizes the fact that individuals rarely call the police (first) when they don't know what to do, although this is often assumed, but rather call when they know that something needs to be done but aren't sure how exactly it should be done or are unable to do it themselves. Removing an unwanted individual from a private residence is a common enough 'normal' policing task, and calling the police might be predicated on the basis that the caller either has been unsuccessful at getting the person to leave, is attempting to avoid escalating a conflict or getting into a violent confrontation, or else doesn't know where to send the person that won't result in them simply returning. Calling the police in this case may fit into the latter category, but the stronger conflict assumptions in line with Bittner's skid row setting seem to play a weaker role here: the neighbors are likely still calling the police as a way to 'hand over' ownership of the problem (cf. Christie 1977), but a relevant fact of the case was that the Revierpolizei officer, as a community contact officer, was contacted first and had some level of familiarity with some of the individuals involved. This might not be as immediately interpretable (to the involved parties) as 'turning a private issue into a state issue' if the officer himself is being and acted towards in a more personal / situational role rather than strictly as a police officer, and if the involved parties trust the officer to make a decision in line with their own expectations.

This narrative and its telling—though simple, second-hand, and still a front-stage presentation—refer to the presumed reliance on situational forms of authority within the types of situations Revierpolizei officers often become involved in. Taking this narrative at face value would imply that both parties—the caller and the officer—saw the relevant police role as slightly more flexible than a fixed institutional role and the interactional goal as something to be jointly determined but still with the police officer as the 'expert' with greater leverage or weight in the process of handling the encounter: the officer is not strictly responsive to the citizen in terms of defining a formal police problem based on the citizen's presentation of a problem, but also not entirely free of the expectations of the citizen in terms of how the problem is framed or what actions are taken. (Behrendes and Stenner 2008)

This is not to imply that a situational form of authority will always or even usually be assumed at the outset of non-emergency cases in this region or rural

areas in general. The case involving the attack on Officer Karsten (described in Chapter Four) had begun first with local government officials and then the Ordnungsamt and only then was the Revierpolizei called in, with Officer Karsten's greatest asset being his authority to implement sanctions and utilize coercive force as necessary, such as potentially breaking down the door to a private residence and overcoming physical residence: in this case the institution role was demanded by other agencies lacking in full police powers. One encounter in particular stood out for how well it demonstrated the tactical use of institutional 'posturing': Officer Schmidt needed to make contact with an individual living in an apartment building on the outskirts of a city with a bad reputation. He described the location as "Triple-A:" explaining this as, "Arbeitslose, Alkoholiker, und Asoziale" (lit: unemployed, alcoholics and anti-socials, cf. Funke 1990.) When we entered the parking lot he commented to me on the large number of German flags hanging from balconies[3] and the fact that many of the balconies were occupied: "they don't have anything to do during the day." ("Tagsüber nichts zu tun.") No one addressed us as we left the car, but about a dozen individuals continued to stare at us from balconies or windows, with more appearing over time. I was instructed to stay near the car—"it's less threatening that way." Officer Schmidt moved towards the building and spoke to a shirtless man through a window, but the specific man he was looking for was reportedly not there. The conversation was brief though relatively tense, with the officer sticking to 'formal matters' (in German: *sachlich*) and the other individual providing terse and direct responses with neither party making any other conversational overtures. This case was one of many 'residence checks' in which the Revierpolizei simply needed to confirm if a person lived at their registered address—the majority of these cases I observed were similar to this example, in that the officer (or different officers) had been there before and though the individual was not there, and often it seemed evident that no one lived there, there was no *legitimate* basis for concluding that the person was not there, requiring additional follow-up visits: it was unclear to me

[3] The symbolism and demonstrative use of the German flag is a complicated and developing topic that requires a more in-depth treatment than can be provided here. Earlier stigmas and taboos against using the flag as a source of abstract (and occasionally targeted and alienating) national pride, in the manner of the US, have receded within Germany—allegedly related to a large degree to its use during several significant World Cups—and the presentation of German flags and colors has been normalized in many contexts. The relevant hermeneutic aspect here, however, is that with this enthymeme Officer Schmidt was suggesting something along the lines that the presence of the flags within this context implied a right-wing nationalistic setting, at least in my interpretation, and further discussion confirmed at least the spirit of my interpretation. See also Götz 2016.

whether there simply was little that would serve as legitimate negative confirmation—neighbors very often reported not knowing the person at all or never seeing anyone in the home, or if the officer simply felt it better to give the person the benefit of the doubt, as reporting them as 'address unknown' would trigger financial and other consequences but not necessarily any benefits. After a brief and inconclusive conversation, Officer Schmidt returned to the car and commented to me "I don't want to stay longer, I can't take any actions here." ("Ich will nicht länger bleiben, ich habe keine Maßnahmen hier" lit: "I have no measures here.")

The strict maintaining of a visible institutional role was used in this case to avoid closer to deeper interaction, in line with the expectations and understanding of the situation and setting by Officer Schmidt. The primary practice for maintaining this role was simply maintaining a distance, rather than one of taking control of the situation. (cf. Sykes and Brent 1980) At a certain level this could be interpreted as a self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton 1949: 475–490), as the officer's expectation of a basic skepticism, if not hostility, towards the presence of the police resulted in the establishment of an institutional role intended to maintain a separation—physically and socially—between police and public, which better allows the residents to view the officer as 'just another cop' and is also unlikely to soften their shared or individual images of the police. This is a particular acute and relatively modern issue in the German policing literature: populations with which police are broadly seen to have conflict potential, or which in which mutual distrust is often invoked as a source of further problems, i.e. immigrants, refugees, and arguably the political far-right, are treated in a distant, formal, and heavily institutionalized way to avoid the appearance of bias or misunderstanding, but at same time this institutional image is likely harsher than the presentational strategies used by police in most 'normal' encounters. (cf. Behr 2000, 2018, Sauerbaum 2009, Hunold et al. 2010) It must also be considered that the immediate goal being pursued by Officer Schmidt was institutionally-driven: the need to conduct registration checks has little, if any, correlation with generic community values and in the immediate local context was (from the perspective of Officer Schmidt, at least) more likely to be interpreted as bureaucratic overreach rather than peace-keeping, public safety, or taking local concerns into consideration.

Part of the consistent construction of community that was appreciated by officers was the basic level of homogeneity and familiarity: while there was diversity in terms of groups who might be seen as responding and reacting to the presence of the police in different ways, these were generally still seen as individuals within a community—their expected behavioral patterns, attitudes, and varying propensities for becoming a problem were not directly attributed to their broader

backgrounds but more often to life experiences and opportunities. Some people might be considered "not worth taking seriously," (in the words of one Revierpolizei officer regarding bar regulars who were happy to share gossip) but it may be because "they never really had much in their lives, so they just want something to tell to feel important."[4] The officer, while on one hand completely disregarding the individuals, established a connection with them and expressed sympathy for their concerns, even as he was more concerned with the expression than with the reality, because he could view them as part of his own community that while individually identifiable (based on their behavior and setting, i.e. being daytime regulars in a local bar) were still broadly inseparable from the community, and despite the admonition against taking them seriously, could in other cases be useful for providing information—according to the officer their interest in gossip, while fueling their use of embellishment or outright fabrication, also lead to them often being up to date on many under the surface problems. In essence it didn't matter if these were "good people," they fit within the community and could work with the police in that capacity and were therefore "our people."

Foreigners and 'outsiders,' in the sense of those who didn't grow up in the area, in general were rare—this is not to suggest that foreigners were necessarily outsiders, but simply that by virtue of not being local, alternate narratives were available and the chance (as in previous examples) of police maintaining a strict institutional policing and social distance is plausibly higher.[5] The same officer who both demeaned and accepted the bar regulars within his beat reserved his highest contempt for an art collective that had been formed several years prior out of a previously empty village. The residents were allegedly all "from the West," and primarily or entirely women, but they "didn't fit in" within the broader community. I wasn't given much more explanation for how exactly they didn't fit in, though it became clear that the officer personally had had only fleeting or

[4] Or they might be, in the estimation of another officer, "village newspapers" ("Dorfzeitung") who "knew all about God and the world," with whom one must be particularly cautious about one's words, but could also be a useful way to get the word out.

[5] For example, the immigrant owner of a Greek restaurant was considered locally-important, and the restaurant was often used for informal meetings of police administrators, dinner meetings between police and other important officials or community representatives, and for regular meetings between a group of current and retired higher level police officials. The restaurant owner was considered essentially a manager of social and cultural space, also relevant to the location of the restaurant on the central town square. At the same time, the region lacked the type of geographically separate immigrant communities that have traditionally defined cities in the United States, suburbs in France and are increasingly brought up in discourses on immigration and culture in Germany. (cf. Park 1952, Jacobs 1961, Hunold et al. 2010, Fassin 2013)

no contact with any of the residents but rather disapproved of what they represented—artists from the West in somewhat non-traditional living situations. This was most notable as the same officer had earlier expressed disapproval for other corners of society, not only the bar regulars, but in ways that considered them incorporated into the community, and it remained unclear of whether the ‘lack of fitness’ narrative was second-hand, i.e. based on recounted events of conflicts or interactions, or was derived from assumptions about their ‘outsider’ qualities.

Groups that were considered to be ‘outsiders’ were otherwise rare, and when they existed—as in the previous examples—encounters between them and police were exceedingly rare. This fits with the presumptions that institutional authority will dominate police-citizen encounters under many or most conditions, but the effective establishing of a type of shared community can constitute one exception in which situational authority often plays a larger or dominant role. Huey (2007), examining police practices on skid rows in three cities, concludes with “the idea that communities articulate their values through their policing practices.” (201) This, however, presumes that the values identified through policing practices are not only reflective of the community but are in some way derived from community expression or interaction with community members. While one of the stated goals of community-oriented policing has been to adapt to existing communities and strengthen their internal bonds, critics have generally likened it to simply importing outsider, middle-class ‘standards of decency’ often with an emphasis on making neighborhoods ‘profitable’ in terms of outside investment and tourism. (cf. Marat 2019) It should also be considered that Revierpolizei officers very often came into encounters by direct invitation—when contacted directly by citizens who were very often previously known to them—and that this can constitute a self-reinforcing pattern of self-fulfilling prophecies in which individuals not enmeshed in certain avenues of community life and not having much routine experience with the police will see no reason to contact an individual community officer and will be more likely to have contact, if at all, with patrol and response units, and in turn the community officer will have little opportunity or basis for developing a more ‘fleshed out,’ personal, and positive image of those individuals. The argument here is not specifically about homogeneity or diversity within neighborhoods and communities, but rather about the factors that allow for a neighborhood to be effectively constructed this way by police: the police as an organization and as individuals have little direct control over the makeup of their community, but they have significantly more control over how they interact with and relate to the groups and individuals who make up that community, particularly in the case of establishing partnerships.

7.3 Community Partnerships

> "The first thing to understand is that the public peace—the sidewalk and street peace—of cities is not kept primarily by the police, necessary as police are. It is kept primarily by an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary control and standards among the people themselves, and enforced by the people themselves."
>
> – Jane Jacobs (1961: 32)

The relative (social) distance between police and public has been a significant locus of much of policing theorizing and reform, with most 20th century reform attempts—specifically in the US and UK—attempting to segregate the police from the community as often as possible to anesthetize the organization and individual officers from corrupting influences; this centralization of police organization was implemented under the broader frame of professionalism and an industrial or bureaucratic model (cf. Vollmer 1971, Walker 1993, Sklansky 2011) but also indirectly established many parallels with the earlier Continental model of police represented through national *gendarmies* and with visible influences even on the Anglo-American-based German police reconstituted following the Second World War. (Linnan 1984, Liang 1992, see also Lindenberger 2000 for a more general overview of the theoretical and historical development of police in East Germany) This professional model was intended to "offer… not only a way of isolating the police from potential sources of corruption (the overriding concern of 20th century reformers) but also a way of emphasizing that the police have, or should have, special skills and knowledge that can be written down, taught and continually improved (a more common concern of reformers today.)" (Sklansky 2011: 7) The ideals of the professional model, however, have increasingly been criticized for assuming that the 'expert knowledge' of the police will be enough to gain approval and avoid criticism of their strategic planning as well as individual case-by-case decision-making, and attempts to involve the community have risked stumbling over this point. Sparrow (2016) notes that:

> Some departments attempt to engage the community as "eyes and ears"; that is, to provide information to the police in support of their traditional crime-fighting role. The one-sided nature of this deal is what eventually renders it unsustainable. Communities will not participate for long unless they know their own concerns are being taken seriously and incorporated into policing priorities. A more mature community policing model must be a two-sided deal: police and public working together not only to achieve results, but also to set the agenda. The advantages to the community must be obvious and tangible. (105)

A major focus of community policing has been on establishing partnerships with existing community groups (of various types) for the purposes of 1) harmonizing the purported value systems that govern local and everyday police work with those of the community, broadly, and 2) engaging the community itself—at least symbolically—in its own policing. These groups are relevant both, as implied, as a proxy for the more complex and harder to delineate complexities of everyday community or neighborhood life and due to their access to resources, networks, individuals, and very often their more concrete or overt moral scheme—particularly in the case of community social organizations with defined purposes such as aiding the homeless, combating drunk driving, or neighborhood watches. (cf. Gusfield 1989)

Criticism of community policing, both its practice and its theory, have often emphasized the perceived incompatibility between the basic tenets and values of policing—those which have essentially weathered decades of reform—and the variety of cultural perspectives, standards of conduct, and moral values within specific communities. (Manning 1988, 2001) Community policing, despite rosy interpretations presenting it as a return to a better age of policing, implies a compromise or selection between differing, likely conflicting, standards. Thatcher (2001) writes that:

> To tell officers "enforce the law, but don't enforce it too strictly" may make perfect sense to most officers. But it could also amount to a mixed message of the sort that organizations try to avoid – a dysfunctional directive of "on the one hand this, on the other hand that" that can lead to paralysis and bad decision making. (771)

Thatcher assumes value conflict at a minimum between police organizations and communities (cf. Lovig and Skogan 1995, Harcourt 2001, Manning 2001) if not between individual officers and local residents. The involvement of alternative value systems in the guise of community partnerships is intended to provide guidance at two levels: determining which problems should be emphasized, and determining ways to handle situations effectively. These approaches have invoked a 'social norms' approach, in which, rather than emphasizing criminal enforcement (i.e. inducing a 'fear of being caught' in potential criminals or strengthening the cultural norms that support police power and authority) attempts are made to redefine the social meaning of crime, to make law-abiding or at least desirable behavior essentially coterminous with local social norms. (cf. Waldeck 1999, Harcourt 2001) Community partnerships, ideally, provide legitimacy to these efforts and provide a starting point for 'ideal' values, avoiding both the appearance and the difficulties of the hegemonic imposition of outside standards, a way to

frame the desired (lawful) behaviors as already desired within the community. (cf. Bourdieu 1991) These attempts in practice have additionally revealed, apart from tensions between police expectations and demands and those of the community, rifts within segments of communities and the fact that police tend to partner with groups most similar to the institution of policing itself: traditional, conservative, male-dominated groups which are less threatening to the status quo, as well as those with already defined problems. Winship and Berrier (1999) examined police-community partnerships in Boston and found many suspect invocations of 'community values' attributed to churches in particular, which led to a police mandate to "focus on the truly bad youth" but "in a fair and just way." (67, cited in Thatcher 2001) The invocation of the moral order from a community church provided a cloak of legitimacy—the police here were on the side of good—but essentially allowed police to target the behaviors, groups, and individuals they had previously targeted, and mentions of justice and fairness allowed the police to frame their behavior as just and fair provided they used the provided vocabularies and rhetoric—e.g. criminal enforcement is 'helping to turn lives around' rather than punishing.

Community partnerships, therefore, affect the visible nature of policing values (and their synchronicity with community values) in three general ways:

1) Priorities and the defining of problems
2) Involvement of or deference to outside actors/agencies
3) Symbolic association

Letting police priorities be in some part—at least dramaturgically—driven by the concerns of community groups arguably has many potential positives, including the identification of previously unknown or overlooked problems, higher satisfaction in the local police organization among the community, less need to rely on either 'arbitrary' uses of discretion or aggressive enforcement / zero-tolerance to present an effective image of order and safety, and the better potential for a 'social norms' approach to be effective. (Pütter 2006, cf. Schreiber 2011 who presents a much more skeptical view of police-community cooperation) It has long been argued that policing institutional priorities, particularly defined through statistics and generated data, is often, at a minimum, out of sync with community values. (Young 1991, Kelling and Coles 1996) Recent changes and innovations in policing have specifically focused on changing how police identify problems as serious, treatable, and likely to escalate or continue if ignored, including such efforts as hot-spot policing, COMPSTAT, and various data driven approaches. (Manning 2003, Sparrow 2016, Egbert and Krasmann 2019) A major concern,

however, remains identifying those problems which are shared by the community, essentially serving as a weak proxy for community values as the solutions, outcomes, and—most importantly—formalized documentation of those outcomes preferred or required by the police may not mesh as well with local norms. The defining of the problems can be broadly moral or heuristic, as in the example of Boston, which can result in "the exploitation of existing rivalries and animosities within the population" (Liang 1992: 72), or targeted at specific pre-identified problems, essentially granting legitimacy to the definitions of problems put forward by other groups of "moral entrepreneurs" (Becker 1963), whether by viewing drunk driving as an failure of self-control, presenting drug users as victims rather than offenders, or seeing the homeless as individuals making a choice which is disruptive to local business. (Gusfield 2000, Best 2017 cf. Kelling and Coles 1996) Accepting the phenomenology of problems suggested by community groups establishes a form of symbolic connection in that it involves those groups in the work of the police as it is conducted, and may even affect the way in which police work is structured and carried out, though these connections remain at a deeper symbolic level.

Actively involving groups in police work—even if that activity is only 'police work' in the sense that it deals with a problem given legitimacy through a partnership or cooperation between police and moral entrepreneurs—demonstrates a level of trust and inclusiveness, incorporating additional individuals and groups, presumably with recognizable values and priorities, into the broader life-world of policing. It also reduces the social distance between officers and citizens implicit in the institutional view, depending on specific affiliations. (cf. Stebbins 2016) At the most simplistic level, this was identified in the expressed solidarity in which police officers consistently waved not only to other officers (whether they knew them or not) but also to ambulances, fire trucks, and other public safety personnel. Most notably, involving other groups in the practice of police work can lead to a more overt recognition of the fact that not all problems considered serious or relevant by the police are best handled with the measures available to (or exclusive to) the police. (cf. Bittner 1974) As discussed, a shared recognition of a problem between police perspectives and community beliefs may not correspond to the shared understanding of the best way to solve that problem, and institutional pressures or inertia may lead to police preferring administrative solutions invoking the criminal law over the opposition of elements of communities which prefer less interventionist or punitive methods. (Christie 2004, see also Pütter 2006) Incorporating citizens into problem-solving at various levels, ranging from simply identifying issues to actively cooperating with the police in

resolving situations, can both firmly delineate the differences between the abilities, powers, and reflexes of the police and those of the outside agencies and groups with different resources, interests and goals as well as potentially dissolving or weakening the boundaries between the two. While the active engagement of citizen groups in crime prevention has been controversial and generally downplayed by the police (particularly in the US in the aftermath of the killing of Trayvon Martin) but neighborhood watches and the privatization of policing continue to play significant roles in both actively involving others in the resolution of 'disruptive' incidents as well as in the police learning to effectively exploit the existence of those roles while firmly maintaining their own position at the top of the criminal enforcement hierarchy.

One significant example from Brandenburg demonstrates the active engagement of community groups in a way that was considered (in the analysis but overtly by the involved officers as well) both practical and symbolic. On one occasion—not the first, apparently—a wild boar was reported on the main street of a town in the area, posing a risk to anyone in the area and requiring the police to block off the area around it. An officer told me that the service weapons carried by police were not powerful enough to kill the boar and were more likely to simply make it more aggressive and unpredictable. Rather than obtaining better or specialized weapons, the police contacted the local hunter's association (*Jagdverband*) and a hunter, a private citizen serving as a volunteer, essentially, was dispatched. The hunter shot the boar and took the carcass, at which point the police could clear the scene and allow traffic to continue. Involving the hunter's association was presented to me as standard operating procedure in these types of incidents and in many cases involving wildlife at all, with the explanation that they had both better equipment for specifically dealing with taking down animals and more knowledge of how to deal with animals and how they might react. These explanations were framed so as to not undercut the expertise of the police in terms of applying force and effectively using weapons; at the same time—and slightly more informally—it was emphasized that the officers themselves are less interested in weapons or their use, while the hunters would both 'enjoy' the opportunity and the fact that they are being called in to take over for the police. What for the police would be considered a risky, unpredictable and potentially stressful situation in which things could easily go wrong was considered—or at least dramatized—as, if not routine, completely manageable by the hunter's association. The police, by involving the hunters at all, could minimize or avoid the threat to their expert status by virtue of the fact that it was the expert decision of responding officers to contact and engage the hunters at all. Statements and

descriptions made by Revierpolizei officers at other times, in contrast, emphasized the need to maintain a good relationship and open communications with the hunter's association and hunters in particular. The local region is particularly popular for hunting and, as a result, firearms ownership is high compared to Germany overall: this is not seen as necessarily leading to a risk of violence or more risk to police officers specifically, but the stated reasoning of officers always mentioned the fact that weapon owners needed to be registered with the local shooting club (*Schützenverein*) and are usually also involved with the hunter's association. By involving the hunters as a 'partner' the police can essentially—symbolically—delegate control over certain aspects and risks of gun ownership to those groups, without the police being seen immediately as a threat, and with a greater likelihood that these groups will report concerns, problems, or 'suspicious behavior' to the police earlier. Involving these groups is directly practical—in their immediate contributions to resolving problems—broadly instrumental—by maintaining positive relations and communication channels and allowing for easier cooperation in a variety of situations—and symbolically meaningful.

Involving community groups, however, often led to a much more informal handling of the problem—one that is also necessarily more difficult to document. This was often related to the use of connections through specific individuals rather than more 'formal' organizational partnerships: often this might involve the same person, but the nature of the relation and the presentation of the problem would vary, reflecting the dramaturgical presentation of police authority. This was related to local knowledge and sometimes practicalities of situations. For example, in one village within Officer Schmidt's beat, the wife of the *Ortsvorsteher* worked locally for a prominent community service organization, *AWO (Arbeiterwohlfahrt e. V.)*, and "if you have certain problems you can go to her," while her husband could handle other types of problems, making their house a useful place to visit informally after working hours. This also corresponded to the often stated but less often reflected explored idea that many problems are only criminal in their outcomes but the 'root causes' of them run deeper. (cf. Braga 2015) While root cause arguments often emphasize deeper structural problems or "social breakdown" (Sasson 1995) this form of community engagement often saw the ideal intervention at an intermediate level relating to social relations and the potential for many problems to be dealt with informally through communication (generally not from the institutional perspective of the police.) An individual who has been involved in a 'disturbance' while drunk may not be seen as needing referral to a social agency immediately, but the officer may consider the best strategy to be talking to friends or family, the local bar owner, or others thought to be already involved in the broader situation: the fact that individuals often had "dual roles"

often mean problems could be addressed informally but with the hint (or even threat) of more formal intervention if those involved didn't see progress being made.

The symbolic association of police and community groups is a significant function in outwardly constructing an image of the community and indicating the type of 'order' which is being enforced. This aspect of community partnerships has more often been explored in critiques of community policing than put forward by its advocates. (cf. Harcourt 2001) Police often worked with other 'referral agencies' in dealing with specific cases, such as child protective services / the youth welfare office (*Jugendamt*); however, this cooperation was primarily more practical as a way to divert cases from a more problematic processing within the justice system and contact between these types of officer and the police (apart from the Ordnungsamt) was for the most part limited to handling individual already ongoing cases. Community partnerships in contrast were maintained both in the handling of cases and in discovering and identifying new issues. Symbolic association incorporates the first two elements of cooperation—in that it suggests both a sharing of priorities and combining efforts to demonstrate shared values—but takes a step further in presenting certain groups, individuals, movements, orientations, etc. as representative of community values. In doing so, this (indirectly or directly) promotes the idea of a singular, consensual community with more-or-less shared values, potentially at the expense of excluded adversarial positions: it is for this reason that partnerships often focus on "valence issues" (Nelson 1984, Gusfield 1989) where even if oppositional views exist they are less likely to be organized or formally and symbolically expressed in public. Crime prevention groups—such as *Weißer Ring,* focused on both crime prevention and victims' rights—often work with police by design as their implicit worldview and set of priorities generally conforms to that of the police institution: at the same time, and despite a significant amount of literature related to crime prevention in the main police station, Revierpolizei officers only rarely mentioned or were seen to interact with these groups (and it is possible that coordination and contact with these organizations was primarily handled by the comparatively smaller crime prevention unit.) Symbolic associations were often found in more abstract contexts with less mission-driven partners which could more realistically be presented as "community life," such as in setting up a police information booth at a classic car show or the local officer attending and being formally introduced at a village festival organized by volunteer firefighters.

Symbolic representations can play a significant role in indicating both to the community (through organizations or structured groups as well as individuals) and police officers (in ways that can guide their use of discretion) what is to be

valued or kept 'sacred.'[6] (cf. Manning 2012) Behr (1993) describes how police in Thuringia, following reunification, were often instructed to pay special attention to banks and ensure their security, reflecting the way money, in a newly capitalist society, symbolically represented a new "Eucharist." (78, cf. Glaeser 2000, Hayward 2004) Overt symbolism of this type was not seen in the present study, possibly reflecting the relative stability of the 'new German states' almost three decades, rather than one year, after (re)unification, or else different attitudes and priorities. This is not to say that banks or other representations of economy played no role: often they were pointed out, and stories of past bank robberies were recounted as evidence for the need to pay attention to the location. But Revierpolizei officers rarely included banks as specific areas that needed to be visited and were not observed to have routine contact with employees or managers in the way they did in many other locations. Similarly to Behr's experience, stories of bank robberies which occurred not long after unification were often repeated as a way to suggest the new risks and dangers that came from "the West," as well as framed in a way to present extreme or deadly violence as rare, primarily an outside problem, and not something highly valued by police officers.

The idea of partnerships and community support was highly valued by officers, at least narratively. Some officers, however, were concerned about declining participation in community groups and events, with one country officer stating, "in the city it still works, but in village fewer people are going along every year." He indicated the generally older age of the volunteer firefighters and suggested that the problem is not only a lack of younger people but a lack of appeal for most community groups for younger people. The most prominent groups, at least in terms of police relevance, in his district included the shooting club (*Schützenverein*), a sailing club, and the aforementioned fire department: the officer described the core municipality in his beat as "one of the quietest in the county." Without contacts in the community, he saw little to do in terms of police work in the more rural areas in particular, "drive through, look left, look right,

[6] Fassin (2013) describes how, despite their general hostility to most of the public in their jurisdiction and youth in particular, the police he observed maintained a certain respect for street racers and car tuners; the officers would often observe these illegal races and seemingly enjoy doing so, but then state that it would simply be too impractical or unfeasible to effectively enforce the law in this situation, and that for the interests of public safety it was preferable to simply observe—apparently this had become routine enough that the racers had no compulsions about continuing despite the police presence. Though this is not necessarily an indication of "community values" it does demonstrate how the values and interests of individual officers can affect how they selectively frame certain types of behavior or events as 'police-able' or 'tolerable.'

that's all." In this case particularly the role of more informal infrastructural settings, i.e. cafes and bars where 'regulars' assembled, was more prominent, where although "you can ignore most of what they say" it was possible to get a feel for what rumors and concerns were in circulation and then weigh this against the more official business of meetings with the municipal director. Weekly meetings were held in a cafe with primarily government agencies, often including forest rangers (*Förster*), and included both an array of general events and calendar-coordination as well as the presentation and discussion of potential problems from a more official or expert perspective. However, observations with this officer also included informal visits to doctors, a nursing home, several workshops and garages, hotels, as well as private residences. This discrepancy was among the most indicative of the challenges of establishing communication or understanding between the Revierpolizei and the community at the organization level, as the organizations that are the best organized—in terms of membership, communicative power and continuity—are often oriented around specific interests and less diverse (specifically in terms of age, gender, and financial status) than the community itself. The 'compromise' solution in effect here—and identifiable in most jurisdictions—seems to effect a happy medium, with officers engaging both with organized groups and more informal groupings to get a 'broader' view of what is going on, but this again highlights the significant discretion of the officer in deciding which perspectives, opinions, concerns, and suggestions to take seriously or prioritize over others. This officer was critical (at least, more vocally than many) of some specific individuals in local government, but also stressed that his work was "not about politics," and that "everyone can still get along." (Notably, it was this same officer who essentially wrote off the community of artists within his municipality as "not from here.")

Infrastructural locations play a significant role in transmitting the content of community—community is both acted out in various locations (public spaces such as town halls or at public events as well as private spaces that fulfill a general social role) and gives priority and salience to those locations. Socially defined spaces can serve as "boundary objects" (Barlösius 2019: 30) where multiple social worlds overlap, such as a café where gossip is shared and where different categories of clientele might interact even if indirectly, such as by making small talk with the owner. This was particularly relevant for the Revierpolizei, as the need to establish a more-or-less singular image of 'our community' required overcoming the social boundaries within that community.[7] The more informal

[7] Compare James Q. Wilson's (1968) more general statement with regard to legalistic departments: "The police will act, on the whole, as if there were a single community standard

groups that frequented informal 'village centers' often could serve as a conduit for the officers to reach (or receive information from) a much large portion of the population, and the utilizing of these resources in turn served as symbol of informal, personal, or community-oriented policing in which individuals saw their own various types of social capital (social standing, relations, knowledge) being valued.

Local knowledge once again played a highly significant role here, as community groups could not be simply treated as independent entities, but rather as both representing specific interests and comprised of private individuals with their own complex web of relations. The last example in particular was a case where the careful balancing of various interests was hinted out though not often made explicit—the officer expanded on a great deal of local history related to locations, groups, and settings, and demonstrated an awareness of how complicated local networks and community politics could be. As an example, a local restaurant and tavern, which had been host to a group of community regulars and a useful spot for gossip, had closed and not yet been replaced, which had left a noticeable 'void' within that corner of the beat and left a great reliance on either engaging with more 'formal' actors or actively seeking out known individuals. This was described as part of a larger trend of decline, however, with community engagement—both through formal organizations and also through simply spending time in public places and 'village infrastructure'—declining as many villages were reduced to only a dozen houses that were occupied year-round and with little expectation of the economic situation improving.

The inclusion of community partnerships in police work in Falkenmark was a more robust and tangible affair than has often been presented in the literature, but was at the same time clearly connected to the nature (and homogeneity) of the region *as is* rather than necessarily a conscious strategy throughout multiple levels of police planning. Much of it was practical not just in terms of capabilities and resources (i.e. utilizing hunters or forestry officers in cases related to wildlife) but in terms of priorities. Crime in almost every narrative context took a backseat to more general concepts of 'public safety' which involved a broader range of expert and lay organizations: notably emergency management agencies (*Katastrophenschutz*) were a major cooperation partner who often worked alongside the police. Flooding was a seasonal problem in many areas, and during flood season this was one of the most significant concerns of the police throughout the county. The police had a more cooperative and often situational role here, with

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of community conduct—that which the law prescribes—rather than different standards for juveniles, Negroes, drunks and the like." (172)

the primary uses of the police involving more general crowd and traffic control functions and also pure manpower for tasks such as placing sandbags, but also including search and rescue. Many situations which involved the police—such as missing persons or injuries—involved other agencies at either formal levels or more informally: the case of a missing person and suspected suicide involved essentially a canvassing of friends and relatives by a Revierpolizei officer but also coordination with the marine police and various local agencies including the fire department. These types of cases tended not so much to demonstrate community values but rather to incorporate already assumed, unchallenged, and unlikely to be challenged values. (The suspected suicide case, for example, was believed by all involved to be 'drug related' but the handling of the case otherwise did not reflect this or any public moral judgement, nor was the question of what relation the police as "law enforcement" had to this case which was based solely on assumptions and no concrete evidence that anyone had been hurt.) The symbolic association of the police was widespread but most visible—in a large, public, 'spectacular' sense—in cases suggesting public safety and risk management or else in events already presumed to be reflective of broader communities, such as the classic car shows, municipally-organized events such as the Christmas Market or various parades, and sports events. The most important everyday associations, however, tended to be more discretionary and based on the routines of individual community officers and how they established networks: the practices of officers to establish and utilize situational and personal authority reflected their understanding and construction of which community or communities they were attempting to maintain order in and based on which standards.

7.4 Liminality and the Spirit of Control

> "A really good detective never gets married."
>
> – Raymond Chandler, *Casual Notes on the Mystery Novel* (1949)

As has been discussed throughout this work, police officers need to be many different things to many different people—occasionally taking on or making concessions to multiple social roles simultaneously. The concept of liminality—based on the Latin *limen*, meaning 'threshold'—was popularized by Victor Turner (1967, 1969) though it has a longer history within anthropology, primarily connected to the study of rites of passage, both individually and communally, and the symbolism and ritual behavior associated with them. Liminality in its most direct, constrained sense refers to the transition period within a ritualized rite of

passage: the point(s) at which the person-being-transformed has shed the most crucial aspects associated with the identity being given up, but has not yet gained the aspects of the new identity; they are "neither one thing nor another." (Turner 1967: 96) In a deeper sense it has come to be applied to roles and/or statuses that are essentially permanently in-between fixed states: liminality has been used to describe the professional status of organizations such as campus police in the United States, who are often at the same both legitimate police organizations and viewed and acted towards in contrast to "real police" (Wada et al. 2010), and management consultants, who need to simultaneously represent various parties and interests and both utilize the knowledge systems of the 'adopting' organization and emphasize their own unique outsider systems. (Czarniawska and Mazza 2003) Liminality has been invoked as an element within dramaturgy. (Gusfield 2000) While the original uses of the term by Turner emphasized the fixed institutional background of the ritual and the need for a shared community understanding of both the ascribed roles and the lack of ascription for the liminal roles, more recent uses of the term have applied it to less structured situations and interactions. (Ibarra and Obodaru 2016) Rather than requiring a necessary and linearly-constructed transition, liminal roles are seen in the lack of defining structures or where two or more institutional frameworks overlap creating pressures to applying conflicting identities or accept mutually exclusive narratives which can only be accomplished by establishing a 'permanent outsider' role and managing to still find an insider space for that role.

The liminal roles described by Turner were presented as lacking in structural foundation—literally the product of a gap between formal structures—and establishing both a blurred personal identity and a cultural void; this was often represented by treating the individual as symbolically dead, considering them tainted and interaction with them taboo, and limiting any connection with them to formalized rituals. (Turner 1969) In less structured settings, interactions with liminal roles have been presented as either defined by "uncertainty, confusion, and disorientation" (Ibarra and Obodaru 2016: 50) or else involving an irreconcilable clash between competing frames. The voluntary nature of liminal roles has been emphasized within dramaturgical perspectives: it is not that individuals *freely* choose liminal roles, but rather that liminal roles are taken up and acted out, presented through (often multi-voiced) narratives and often result from resisting outside contextualization or categorization. (Jones 2013) Experiences of liminality can differ based on whether socialization is being undergone collectively, e.g. through a training academy or cohort, or individually, as well as sequentially, following a fixed and known schedule of training and indoctrination, or randomly, where lessons are learned when problems arrive or serendipitously.

(cf. Van Maanen and Schein 1979) While the concept of 'socialized liminal roles' might appear contradictory, the relevance here lies in how the practices used to maintain liminality and *selectively* invoke fixed roles are learned and culturally transmitted. In terms of police socialization, all four elements could arguably play a role: police are trained within cohorts, but with a presumed and extended period of field training and mentorship; formal training is sequential, but the 'important' lessons for officers tend to be those learned informally through war stories and on the job experience which have no set schedule. (cf. Van Maanen 1973, Manning 1977, Fielding 1988, Conti 2009, Sauerbaum 2009) These factors influence the extent to which a possible liminal role could be considered institutionalized: as still taking place *between structures* but with a clearer understanding of which structures and frameworks it is that are being transitioned between or which serve as 'poles' between which the liminal role can maneuver. In this regard, the extent to which *the* police role could be considered liminal would depend on the extent to which police officers are acting with consideration towards a fixed professional, institutional role, and to what extent their audience is considered to be the community and society in general rather than institutional insiders, i.e. other police. (cf. Christe-Zeyse 2006, Kreissl 2008) The presumption that the singular policing role is liminal, that is, lacking a fixed identity, is not tenable, but rather the idea presented here is that a multitude of situated (street-level) policing roles with various configurations of contrast to or dependence on an idealized cultural and institutional role (which can rarely be fully carried out) invoke aspects of liminality as a mechanism for defending the legitimacy of situational roles without taking up the obligations or limitations of the core institutional role.

The liminality of policing roles is important to the model of authority construction in policing interaction that has been presented in previous chapters: police interactions are driven by and guided by the specter of institutional legitimacy and the powers and responsibilities deriving from the same source. The defining of what is a police encounter can be multi-subjective, in the sense that individuals may react to the presence of a police officer in certain ways and respond in a way that appeals to authority more than generic or everyday social norms (cf. Spencer 1970), but it is the police officer who can *formally* communicate that an encounter is taking place and invoke control (through spatial ordering, the ascription of roles, etc.) Liminality comes into play in situations where formal indication of a 'police encounter' has not happened (yet.) Just as the use of civil attention or "pretending not to see" by police officers is plausibly both a tacit acceptance of the behavior (not) being seen as well as a warning not to make that behavior more visible or overt, the lack of a formalized definition of the situation can never remove the possibility or belief that the situation can be

re-categorized at a moment's notice with the corresponding social roles being shuffled in the process. Among the more extreme examples would be the case of a police officer eating lunch in a restaurant in the middle of a shift: the officer is likely not indicating or establishing a strong institutional authority, and while the separation between "police" and "community" suggested by the practice of "keeping one's guard up" may be reduced, it would be unimaginable for an armed gunman to enter and successfully rob the restaurant without the officer intervening. Following Blumer (1966), *a police officer* cannot eat lunch: a person who is a police officer can. Eating lunch suggests a stepping outside of the institutional police role, but not one so far as to suggest the removal of all the trappings of the profession.[8]

Fyfe (1980), referring to the use of off-duty weapons by US police officers, writes that:

> American police are citizens and police officers. Considerable effort has been expended to eliminate distinctions between them and the communities they serve.

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[8] The lines may here become blurred in terms of cultural narratives and what type of narrative is being told with which characters. For example, "a police officer was on vacation on Mallorca" likely signifies more about the individual in terms of stereotypical characteristics rather than role-based responsibilities, with the assumption that the narrative knows the individual's career as a backstory, while "a police officer was sitting in a donut shop" more likely implies a uniformed, on-duty police officer, based on cultural assumptions and stock jokes. The divide here lies between the institutionalized role of a police officer which suggests interchangeability and the ideal typical officer who can take up that role but is not bound only to it and continues to exist even when not actively playing this role. Though primarily academic, this discrepancy continues to play a role in the US where off-duty police officers are generally expected and sometimes required to remain armed and to intervene in any ongoing criminal activity they observe. (Fyfe 1980) Though Fyfe notes the risks of 'friendly fire' and the relative frequency with which non-uniformed police are misidentified as suspects by responding uniformed officers, it seems certain that the strategy of relying on non-uniformed, off-duty "good guys with guns" is destined to remain a core of crime prevention in the US. The 2004 Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act allows any "qualified law enforcement officer" including retired officers to carry a concealed firearm regardless of local laws or ordinances, with some exceptions. The law explicitly states, however, that these firearms are being carried by private individuals with no additional authorization or law enforcement powers outside their own jurisdiction: it is unclear exactly what "Safety" the act itself is referring to: a significant portion (about 10% but even higher in some jurisdictions) of police officer homicides occur off-duty, but it is not clear that most of these were related to policing itself or involved unarmed officers (Fyfe 1980), and the act itself seems to be primarily a response to the assumption that police officers traveling to other states will be armed regardless of state or local law and could otherwise be subject to criminal prosecution. Within Germany, the most parsimonious comparison would be simply to say that off-duty officers are simply private individuals with significantly reduced power and authority out-of-uniform.

> Some distinctions, however, are both desirable and necessary and thus are not subject to these efforts. It is desirable and necessary that on-duty police fulfill the role of active intervener in threatening situations. It is also necessary, therefore, that they be distinguishable from most citizens by being armed during that time. (80)

Though not making the same argument, Fyfe touches on this duality of policing: officers are intended to be functional members of society, but at the same time apart from society and able to intervene in situations deemed threatening—unstated here is the important consideration that it is the police themselves, as an organization as well as individuals, who most concretely determine which situations are threatening. This already hints at the liminal nature of police officers *as private citizens*, at the most extreme suggesting the right to invoke policing powers or apply force, even deadly force, while off-duty (as in the US), but even if one assumes that the policing worldview is unique or significantly different from that of non-policing "standard" life-worlds. This second point admittedly could apply to any profession, hobby, or identity which offers a divergent perspective on social behavior—it first takes on special significance when one considers how, when and where private lives and personal relationships intersect with formalized policing roles.

7.4.1 The Police Officer's Two Bodies

Personal authority refers to the understandings of the role of an individual in an encounter which are guided by understandings of the individual—the inclusion of 'authority' is intended to emphasize that some understanding of policing legitimacy is still included here and that the status of the individual as a police officer is still highly relevant, but that personal relations are still allowing individual or intersubjective norms to drive the interaction, rather than a deference to formal authority. At the same time, personal authority is primarily invoked in situations in which this police status is in some way relevant—in cases ranging from obvious crime activity to basic questions about procedure or personal advice about how to handle a potentially dangerous (legally or physically) situation. The acknowledgement or invocation of policing status reasserts the existence and possibility of an institutional role, but personal authority can be maintained with practices which subvert, minimize, or avoid this role as well as in cases where personal relations far outweigh institutional considerations, such as a police officer lecturing his son about underage drinking. More commonly

observed cases involved less familiar but still acquainted individuals who the officer might encounter both on- and off-duty: neighbors, former classmates, cousins or extended family, former partners, etc. These relationships were often not close enough as to remove all appearances of police authority, but were also close enough as to essentially require an established form of communication governed by person norms rather than institutionalized authority: in most cases a simple wave or friendly greeting sufficed, but in more in-depth cases this involved an entire subversion of a 'normal' policing vocabulary, a translation of speech outside of its institutional bounds.[9]

The liminality of policing here essentially referred to a recasting of the role of police, establishing—at least attempting to establish—a new default that eschewed the formal institutional role. Police officers in rural areas and who police those areas are, by some standards, never off duty; yet this is not the same as being permanently 'on call,' but rather their job is deeply symbolic and can never fully not be. Whether this is manifested in the officer being called "sheriff" by a waitress (in or out of uniform) or by officers attending community events on duty but, apart from trappings of the office, outwardly appearing to share the same experience as any other local resident, these officers maintain a role that is characterized both by not being identical to that which it implies but also by its ability to invoke that role at a moment's notice.[10]

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[9] David et al. (2017) present a slightly odd example of a police interrogation which stands out from their other examples by opening with very personal small talk, including the police officer telling the interviewee about his upcoming transfer and both briefly mentioning their military careers. Though lacking further context, this interview (superficially, at least) appears to be a case of personal relationships dominating the interaction in terms of form, though it quickly switches to a "proper" policing tone once accusations of criminality are made. While the authors interpret this more as a conscious strategy to evoke a confession, it is not necessary to view interpersonal de-institutionalized communication forms as unconcerned with institutional aims. Though no cases were observed in which officers 'tricked' someone by affecting an overly friendly demeanor, a significant deal of information about potential concerns, issues or criminal activity was gathered as part of what was essentially small talk.

[10] The presumption here is that crucial elements of the policing role can be transported into personal or everyday social roles, rather than being confined to a strict binary in which police are essentially always police (except in private moments where they are not) reflecting a stricter "us vs. them" mentality. Van Maanen (1973) quotes one officer:

> To most people we seem to be inhuman, somehow separate and apart. Almost like another species. Maybe they're right but I'll tell you, I'd trust even my worst enemy in this department before I'd trust the people out there. (42)

The different analytic levels of policing typically are presented as individual, organization and institutional. (Bittner 1965, cf. Meyer and Rowan 1977) The symbolic nature and framing function of the institution has been widely discussed in the literature and has been a crucial part of the current analysis. Organizational studies of the police (especially following Wilson [1968]) have often been more technical, looking for 'best practices' and using meso-level organization-oriented methods or else considering the organization to be the summation of individual efforts. (Reiss 1992, Crank 2003) Yet the individual—the police officer—typically has been subsumed within these other schemas, even within a large amount of ethnographic work (cf. Remington 1965, Van Maanen 1977, Skolnick 1985, Mastrofski et al. 1998 cf. Campeau 2019): this is likely to a large extent explainable to the extent that a) institutional and organizational pressures shape police behavior, b) socio-psychological assumptions guide the direction of data collection as well as analysis (e.g. officers who "talk like cops" who flaunt their status as police officers are more interesting both in an everyday sense and analytically), and c) research involving police officers is primarily concerned with the immediate correlates and appearances of 'police work' in the setting in which is performed and the near precedent and antecedents, with less emphasis on or desire to explore a potentially unrelated biography 'life world.' Police ethnography and research on officers as individuals has, justifiably, focused on "working personalities," attitudes, and situational practices rather than life-courses, career trajectories, and everyday lives. More auto-ethnographic works such as that of Arthur Niederhoffer (1969) and especially Peter Moskos (2008b) have provided more reflective explorations of the interplay of an individual with a role and setting in the spirit of Whyte's (1943) *Street-corner Society*. This also speaks to the urban bias in policing literature (Klofas 2000) as the concept of a police officer who essentially only exists while on duty is more sustainable when officers can—and are encouraged by the organization—to firmly (and geographically) separate their work from their private lives. (Banton 1964, Rumbaut and Bittner 1979 cf. Allen and Parker 2013, see also Hughes 1951) The present study highlighted the phenomenon more typically described—but less often theoretically adapted—in studies of rural or remote policing (Young 1993, Huey and Ricciardelli 2015)—as well as often being depicted in popular culture (Bielejewski 2016)—in which police officers exist on the same footing as private individuals within their areas of responsibility and lack clear delineated borders between the private individual (as a community member, family member, friend, etc.) and the varying roles of a police officer. Officers exist both as institutional constructs—the institutional role—as well as 'fleshed out' individuals who take up and dramatize roles guided

and constrained by a variety of institutions and settings, and managing this performance (or hiding it from public view) has been a key part of urban -and thereby 'normal'—police work for at least a century. (Silver 1967, Walker 1993 cf. Rawlings 1995) These 'two bodies' are relevant to all forms of policing, and have been implied in work on police culture, recruitment, and training (Fielding 1988, 1994, Chan 2004, Hunold 2015, cf. Goldsmith 1990) but are most visible in those cases where private lives regularly impact police work and police work regularly overlaps with private life—individuals do not simply bring their past experiences into police work but rather their experience *becomes* police work. The fact that police officers are simply human beings performing a role and yet fixed within a role that fundamentally transforms all interactions within that role and many if not most outside of it is what has given the police an "interstitial" social position. (Wilson 2000: 2)

Officers in Falkenmark—particularly and often intentionally in the Revierpolizei—often cannot avoid liminality in taking on a police role simply due to the overlap of community and policing life-worlds: officers will encounter the same people and visit the same locations on- and off-duty. The knowledge they gained from non-policing experiences and contexts often carried over into police decision-making or narrative and interactional framing. (cf. Allen and Parker 2013) For Revierpolizei officers this was taken a step farther, with police work very often consciously adapting external everyday frames to gain a more proper 'community' understanding which could become actionable and hermeneutically valuable in future situations. Even cases where police adapted 'pure' institutional roles were often guided by factors and contingencies suggestive of a consideration of a deeper community context. For example, the case of the attack on Officer Karsten reported in Chapter Four was both narratively preceded and recounted with an emphasis on the resident's 'outsider' status, the fact that he was known for recurring conflicts with local authorities, and neighbors' presumed distrust of him: this re-contextualized the unfolding scene as neighbors looked on—the neighbors presumably saw the man as the problem and instigator of the encounter, rather than seeing the police and government agents as potential antagonists, though this reading is primarily based on the accounts of the police—and suggested that, if he had been given the chance, Officer Karsten likely would have maintained institutional posturing and enforced a more 'security conscious' and conflict-oriented type of order (Turk's [1966] *cultural norms.*) Situations where police felt the need to visibly project an institutional role were rare (almost every clear example has been presented,) indicating both that officers experienced most encounters fluidly and dynamically, adapting their behavior to the development of the interaction and also that the few situations where Revierpolizei officers attempted to

maintain the image of this authority were guided from the outside by a broader reading of the situation than is outwardly offered by the scene itself—that is, officers knew, as community members as well as police, when to be community members and when to be police.

7.5 Ascribing Motives and Creating Actors

The everyday work of the Revierpolizei as observed, then, often done passively or without obvious intent, is to establish a constellation of situationally-specific roles, be they formal pre-categorized roles or unique individual characterizations in constant flux. The dual levels of the community policing mandate require officers to interpret and manage both individual temporal encounters and to interpret and (selectively) actualize community realities through processes of giving legitimization to norms, values, and different forms of social and cultural capital. Once again, the role of the officer is not far removed from that of a social scientist or ethnographer entering a new setting and gradually adapting and entering a liminal state in which things are both strange and familiar.

> Plucked from its native ground, i.e., the world of common sense, the concept of rational organization, and the schematic determinations that are subsumed under it, are devoid of information on how its term relate to facts. Without knowing the structure of this relationship of reference, the meaning of the concept and its terms cannot be determined… (Bittner 1965: 247)

Institutional frames alone cannot effectively determine how to make decisions that will be universally held up as acceptable or successful outside of the institution—despite this realization in various considerations of police work and bureaucracy in general, this has done little to challenge or alter institutional landscapes, yet the role of the police officer in the community has been found—demonstrably in the present case—to require the management and juxtapositioning of multiple frames. The institutional categories of 'suspects,' 'offenders,' 'victims,' etc. often mean little once removed from their immediate situational contexts or from larger frames of justice, law, and punishment: no community could consist solely of these roles. Sub-culturally defined frames derived from institutional constraints likewise become strained once taken into everyday 'living' contexts: police in practice may be able to effectively construct those they encounter as "know nothings," "assholes," "subhumans," "thugs" and the like, (cf. Skolnick 1985, Van Maanen 1988) but, unless officers are to be hopelessly relegated to interact *solely*

in policing circles, with a distinct policing culture that permeates all aspects of life, other categories need to be able to seep in and define, dynamically and developmentally, the meaning of what an individual does and is within a context. (cf. Goffman 1974, Chan 2004)

The motives police gave to individuals was often framed against local knowledge, though this varied; individuals could be placed against an understanding of the social space or against direct knowledge of that individual (and more often some combination along a great deal of room for heuristic estimations.) The general negative prognosis of 'structural conditions' led to a great many narratives not necessarily downplaying the seriousness of actions but suggesting some possibility of understanding the actor outside of a criminal / legal framework. At the same time, this reflected a basic sense of 'lowered expectations' in many narrative framings. Officer Becker, while lamenting the lack of activities and opportunities for teenagers outside of sports, suggested that this was one of the cultural factors driving a general exodus and that "we're losing all the good ones." Less engaged interactions—just passing by—were more likely than prolonged interactions to rhetorically involve "idiots" or "Asoziale," where an individual could be judged based on a single observed action. Police interactions still involved the use of stock role and stereotypes to provide meaning to what was going on, but for the most part these roles were taken from a wider range, adaptable, and not limited to a police institutional vocabulary.

7.5.1 Communities of Actors and the Community as Actor

> "Crime brings together upright consciences and concentrates them. We have only to notice what happens, particularly in a small town, when some moral scandal has just been committed. They stop each other on the street, they visit each other, they seek to come together to talk of the event and to wax indignant in common. From all the similar impressions which are exchanged, for all the temper that gets itself expressed, there emerges a unique temper … which is everybody's without being anybody's in particular. That is the public temper."
>
> – Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895:102, cited in Erikson 1966: 4)

Cohen (1985) writes that:

> [I]t became fashionable during the 1960s for Western sociologists to talk about the 'eclipse' or 'end' of community, arguing that the spread of the mass media, the growth of centralized state power and the seemingly inexorable tendency to urbanization had

> eradicated meaningful distinctions within societies except those marked by economic status and, in particular, by relations to the capital market. In other words, community had given way to class. Later, others were to argue that class itself had been superseded, and that the salient categories were those of gender, race, and whether or not one was employed… By contrast, it is empirically undeniable that the 1970s and 1980s have seen in the Western world a massive upsurge in sub-national militancies founded on ethnic and local communities. The aggressive assertion of locality and ethnicity *against* the homogenizing logic of the national and international political economies has marked the renaissance of community. This is not surprising: it is this logic which attacks the old *structural* bases of community boundaries. Communities therefore respond by rebuilding their boundaries on symbolic foundations. (76–77)

This 'eclipse' of community, though apparently uncritically accepted by many scholars, reflected instead the adaptation of new forms and sources of shared visible values, primarily (though not only) related to changes in communication and mass media. (Tilly 1973, Hayward 2004) The perceived divide between rural and urban, between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, was likely overstated in terms of organization and disorder in the attempt to develop social theories that could explain both apparently stability and reconcile it with sharp and drastic social change. Likely the romantic view of a fading past played a role as well. Even Robert Park, though no opponent of 'the city' or the 'modernity' it represented, set it apart from more stable, ordered, village life:

> In a great city, where the population is unstable, where parents and children are employed out of the house and often in distant parts of the city, where thousands of people live side by side for years without so much as a bowing acquaintance, these intimate relationships of the primary group are weakened and the moral order which rested upon them is gradually dissolved. (1952: 33, cited in Tilly 1973)

Tilly (1973) remains skeptical of the city and 'community' as binaries, suggesting instead that a) if anything, the 'ideal' versions of rural and urban are opposite poles in a spectrum and that b) a focus on *territorial* communities has led many (scholars and otherwise) to view a "richness of social life" within non-urban settings while overlooking the social life through various segments (kinship, neighborhood, clubs and social organizations, work etc.) that permeates urban life. (cf. Whyte 1943, Andersson 2014) The idealized images and conceptualizations of 'community' presumes that community values are more consistent

and better maintained than urban neighbors, big cities, or (post) modern 'global villages.'[11]

Does this mean that a strengthening of the community (or at least the *idea* of community) as a source of social and cultural capital indicates a general weakening of institutional values? Not necessarily, but De Lint (1999) posits that "a hollowing out of a moral order defined by the nation-state will weaken the traditional institutional bases of police authority." (128) Policing has always relied on community support at some level, and even during the heyday of professionalist reform and the strict separation of a 'pure' police from a corrupting community, there was a need to construct the image of police and perform it for carefully cultivated audience (in that historical case typically of 'allied agencies,' technocrats, politicians, and societal elites.) Kelling and Coles (1996) state succinctly that "police departments, like other professional agencies, shield their use of discretion for a variety of reasons." (170) Chief among these reasons is the fact that discretion has almost always conflicted with the necessary idealism of

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[11] It should be clear that this assumption forms the basis of a great deal of policing strategy and theory. For example, Kelling and Coles (1996):

> Hard-core predators and gang members wreak havoc with other youths, especially in poor and ghetto neighborhoods. Education suffers and jobs flee the neighborhood, both making a tough situation worse for inner city youth. More directly, good youths fear the depredations of the 6 percent [of 'chronic offenders'] and many elect for their own protection to join gangs and/or carry weapons, in effect being pressured or forced into criminal activity. Unlike many adults who can retreat into their cars and homes, youths must expose themselves to urban life *on the streets*. It is not surprising that they should take protective action. Unfortunately, the situation is only exacerbated by a libertarian philosophy that offers levels of freedom to young people that they simply do not have the internal controls and experience to manage. (247).

The general premise, though rarely stated explicitly, is that *even* inner-city communities would share 'mainstream values' if they weren't terrorized into submission by youth-dominated violence. Central to this belief is the foundational myth of the 'chronic 6%,' the belief (deriving originally from the longitudinal deviance studies of Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck and expanded on by Thorsten Sellin and Marvin Wolfgang) that a small proportion of repeat offenders are directly responsible for a plurality of crime (Wolfgang 1973) and further indirectly responsible for the majority of crime. As a result, crime control strategies in the US—both "community-oriented" strategies and those emphasizing crime fighting, zero tolerance, etc.—have sought to identity and, through incarceration, incapacitate these offenders. Though this was downplayed as a focus of "Broken Windows" it was often referred to in the contexts of policing tactics, and has been cited as a reason for crime reductions in New York by William Bratton and Rudy Giuliani; meanwhile, the US prison population has continued to grow more-or-less unrelated to the rate of reported crime. (cf. Garland 2001)

an institutional model and set itself in opposition to a community model. This is not to posit a conflict-oriented, dominating institutional perspective against a peaceful, consensus-oriented community: the present study emphasizes the singular nature of the stated community precisely because this is the image which is actively constructed and represented at the expense of constructions of *communities*, overlapping societies, subcultures, etc. The establishment of a singular community—whether broadly or narrowly constructed—provides an idealized legitimacy and establishes stakeholders and a public which the police can *serve*, rather than allowing for narratives establishing the police as power-players, moral entrepreneurs, or even a cartel. (cf. Strauss 1982b) Christie (1977), for example, states that "local courts out of tune with local values are not local courts;" (10) the same would certainly apply to a police department, raising the question of how these values and practices are presented and viewed as in tune or out of tune. This is particularly relevant in Germany where police are organized, identified, and labeled at the state level, though they often operate locally, and much more needs to be done simply to create a cultural or cognitive association between the localness of a community and the local police. This is a type of higher-level image work, sustained by the lower level performance of roles and the presentation of symbols to create shared meaning or reject the reality of others. These routines and rituals of inclusion and exclusion are certainly inherent to police work, and adapting an ethos of 'community concern' in policing is primarily a recognition of this fact but also an opening to the vulnerability of appearances: a police force simply concerned with 'law and order' is primarily held to its own standards and honest as long as it is consistent; one which claims to represent the community fails that community twice when it makes decisions that can be effectively represented as violating the values of that community. The easiest way to fail this latter test, often seen in the adaption of 'zero tolerance' policies under the guise of community policing, is to take up the rhetoric of one community perspective while still enforcing a type of order largely determined outside of the local community itself. (Harcourt 2001) This is often a question of asking, if the police are there to protect their communities, what or who are they protecting it from? While either of these two answers could be considered 'convenient,' concerning, or acceptable in varying contexts, often police, as an organization and institutionalized culture, will see the *real problems* as either 'outsiders' or 'the community itself.' A great deal of the historic and ethnographic literature—up to the present day—has essentially portrayed (primarily urban) police as being at war with their own communities, or with the parts of the communities they deem illegitimate or undesirable, and using the law as a tool to enforce a symbolic order. (Silver 1967, Westly 1970, Niederhoffer 1973, Manning 1977, Uchida 1993, Marks 2004,

Peterson 2008, Fassin 2013, see also Anderson 1999) Though not necessarily more encouraging, the rhetorical presentation of outside, even symbolic, threats may represent a more unified construction of a community with which the police (organizationally and individually) identify with, and this type of presentation is arguably more sustainable and (consequently) more common in homogenous and/or rural settings. (cf. Banton 1964, Young 1993) The abstract fear of crime is considered to be rising in Germany—though reported fear of crime is generally higher in 'mid-sized' cities and lowest in rural areas, it is also significantly higher in the East than the West, despite no consistent and significant differences in reported crime that could explain this. (Birkel et al. 2019) This makes it particularly notable when police perform image work attempting to downplay (or at least not highlight) the potential for criminality and attempt to emphasize more 'service-oriented' functions over the less approachable but (contextually) rhetorically stronger, less assailable, images of the crime fighter. Realistically, though, the images of the differing police functions—law enforcement, order maintenance, peacekeeping—are all sustainable to some degree (if presented in believable and narratively useful ways to accepting audiences) regardless of their connection to actual police work, and emphasizing one image does not mean entirely rejecting the others; police can emphasize service while still maintaining their authoritative and decisive nature as first responders against violent crime, yet this will require a type of consistent in presentation and a consistent set of symbols and representations and an effective juxtapositioning of the police against knowns and unknowns, abstract and concrete, insiders and outsiders.

The greatest depiction of this in Falkenmark, as a prominent example, was the discrepancy between the harsh language the police used to discuss hypothetical or distant (media) cases compared to the mediating—in descriptive language and in interactional process—that was common to most local cases. Abstract and distant criminals "deserve what they get," while in our community "we don't want to hurt anybody," and even bad decisions and bad actors are due some form of sympathy. Of course, not all problems were—or are—divided into internal or external, and simply being a resident of a municipality was not always sufficient to make one a member of the community in the manner intended here: the most overt and obvious presentations of institutional authority and 'professional' policing where reserved for those who, without necessarily being considered dangerous, unpredictable, chaotic, or undesired, simply could not be fit into the communicative frames that governed 'community life.'

Though useful as a metaphor, the binary of exclusion is not applicable to all aspects of community policing, and the officers of the Revierpolizei were not consistently engaged in establishing a singular consensus-oriented community. The

'realistic' attitudes expressed by officers admitted that some areas and groups would be open to not only the presence but also cooperation with the police, but might attempt to establish more conceptual 'problems' than they could actually assist with, while others would treat the visible and overt presence of the police as a potential provocation in its own right. Officers emphasized the need to establish known and (to some degree) trusted contacts particularly in more 'problematic' cultural and geographic areas—two officers discussing a particular incident in what they termed the "red light district" of one city explained the necessity of 'rationing' visits to not be overly disruptive; one officer interjected "we have our 'spies' there," and they both explained that if the people they know trust them in return, problems and information will reach them, but if they get 'too close' they might jeopardize that trust. This type of boundary work was primarily narrative and broadly selective rather than reflective of individual encounters; it could be presumed that this would transfer down to the interpretation of various interactional practices similarly (if not identically) to how the shift from an institutional guided frame to a situational frame can transfer a punishable insult against an officer into a harmless and conversation-prompting joke. Those considered from the outset to be outsiders may have less leeway within the interaction and be expected to adapt to the rules and rituals of the interactional frame whether they are intimately aware of them or not, whereas insiders are allowed some level of 'behind the scenes' access—though it may not be much—in order to guide the interaction to a mutually satisfactory conclusion that subsequently corresponds to bureaucratic demands and narrative constraints.

The type of situationally-driven exclusion or inclusion was less visibly related to the exclusionary police practices often associated with the decay of the welfare state and the rise of neo-liberalism in Western society. At a narrative level, police were willing to adapt more 'classical' structural arguments as moderating effects, if not quite techniques of neutralization. (cf. Maruna and Copes 2005) The institutional demands on police were less strict and more avoidable than those often associated with, for example, stop-and-frisk or gang enforcement in New York and, though not necessarily of great significant, it is worth mentioning that most officers had been trained in (and all had bene born in) an ostensibly socialist society with a differing view of crime and deviance; most local residents had also been born under that system. But questions of attitudes or ideology are here secondary to those of practices and action. The exclusionary practices observed were primarily *of omission*, of reserving situational, negotiating interaction for those who can be ascribed roles as part of the community and where the current situation not only *can* be narratively framed with a past and future but where it *must* be. The community is constructed through partnerships and symbolic

associations but especially through those encounters where it does not need to be invoked in order to be mutually understood as a governing factor. This is not unique to Falkenmark, as the community can be variously constructed to determine what is acceptable or normal in a specific time and place, but it was the visible inclusivity that made the cases of exclusion stand out, and the fact that an unstated mantra of "first, do not harm" seemed to rule encounters by default suggested the variability of frames, demands and goals which governed encounters.

7.6 Keeping the Community Alive

The Revierpolizei officers in Falkenmark live in a world of both change and stability. Their job is both to react to *things happening* and to proactively engage with the world. They universally see the situation of their community and the region in general as bleak, but at the same time see the value in emphasizing the positives and strengthening the things that hold their community together. The idea of policing they use—the lived world, rather than a specific institutional ideal—is both old and new, incorporating aspects of policing mythology and nostalgia (Crank 1994, Kelling and Coles 1996, see also Glaeser 2000) and yet in line with the tenets of 'modern' policing orthodoxy: community-orientation and problem-solving.

Klofas (2000) describes how police reform in the US has often been more ideological and idealized than linked to changes in practices or even theories of practice. He cites the 1967 President's Crime Commission report, at the height of "Great Society" rhetoric, which advocated a move away from approaching policing and crime generally as a "contest between the officer and the criminal" (Klofas 2000: 234) and instead a focus on broader social problems. (see also Walker 1992) Although this report was seen as a turning point in American policing, particularly in establishing and encouraging academic involvement in structuring and implementing policing reforms, Klofas notes that the report's "concern with objective, definable conditions of communities does not seem to have the same place in discussions of contemporary policing. Instead, community policing discussions have often invoked idealized versions of self-regulating communities." (235) The idealized, progressive ideas which eventually resulted in community policing and various modern trends in democratic policing (Wilson and Kelling 1982, Manning 2001, 2012, cf. Wood 2016) not have not entirely disappeared from discussions of policing, but have rarely been implemented into actual police work with any broad consensus of success—the earlier optimistic

discourses of solving social problems have been replaced with a more nuanced approach which sees this problems as less a 'things-to-do' list and more as mutual embeddedness and representative of power dynamics even in the identification of problems. (Gusfield 1989, Best 2017, cf. Giddens 1991) At the same time, the various fields, disciplines, and specializations that deal with those types of problems regularly linked to crime, deviance, order, and policing—including "troubled persons industries" (Gusfield 1989)—have carved out their own realms without necessarily impacting or even being impacted by the work of the police; for example, contemporary accounts tend to emphasize a coming 'crisis' in policing due to frequent encounters with mentally disturbed persons which are not seen as 'real police work,' less often reflecting on the fact that this is almost certainly related to the increased (or at least altered) power of the label 'mentally ill' and the function of this label as a traveling object. (Harbusch 2019) Exactly this type of work has long been a key component of policing and formal social control, evidenced both by Erving Goffman and specifically by Bittner's (1967b) first study of the police dealing with mentally disturbed individuals. It is not the nature of police situations has changed, but rather that those situations have become applicable to a new range of outside or overlapping institutional vocabularies which reinforce and highlight the inability of the police institution—as currently constructed—to effectively deal with 'root causes' in earlier progressive conceptions. Despite decades of criticism of the "crime fighter orientation" in the academic literature as well as within policing itself, this perspective has remained entrenched not necessarily just in attitudes but in the nature of how policing is conducted, how policing defines situations, and how institutional goals are conceptualized and realized. Even in Germany, which has effectively resisted many of the more worrying trends of American or British policing, the "warrior mentality" is well established (Behr 2000, 2006, 2017) and the bureaucratic structures of policing essentially mirror those of the US and UK. The case of Falkenmark presents both an old and new problem—the types of social problems identified there are not particularly 'modern,' 'flashy,' or unique, but simply that of a non-ideal economic position and demographic change, and yet new for reflecting the slow realization that policing must be more flexible than a singular ideal model intended for inner-city crime reduction. (Young 1993, Klofas 2000) In this case, the question of "what police do" is not simply one of naïve interest, but is essentially a search for (counter) examples to the long-cited cycles of institutional ennui, 20-year-memories, and buzzword technocracy which have led policing, as an institutional, into a state of both perpetual reform but also locked it into a limited worldview with a fixed set of problems and goals. (cf. Sklansky 2011, Sparrow 2016) The Revierpolizei in Falkenmark were actively involved in the community,

contextually reactive and proactive, yet at the same time demonstrated little of the “datafication” (Egbert and Krasmann 2019: 59) that is increasingly driving the organization and practice of policing, with officers acting on ‘common sense’ and ‘local knowledge’ rather than predictive models or database analysis.

A key aspect of policing has been the delineation of areas of responsibility: the defining and ownership of problems. Unlike the more specialized and ‘scientifically-guided’ approaches of large urban departments, rural police can rarely effectively limit their interventions to crime or even situations that easily lend themselves to formal definition. They engage with the communities they know, both as they already exist and as they are hoped to exist. Wilson (1968) described ‘service-oriented’ departments which “treat every citizen complaint as requiring a police response [and] do not rely on the criminal code to define police issues.” (Liederbach and Travis 2008: 451) Officers in these departments acted more informally—establishing a form of situational authority—and saw their job as closer to protecting an insider community: policing *for* a community rather than policing *against* a community. ‘Watchman style’ departments, by contrast, rarely intervened at all, but performed a clearer ‘peacekeeping’ function, defining problems with the use of discretion, rather than following strict legal standards or policies—presumably based on internal, policing standards (though it is unclear to which extent these should be considered institutional or culture) rather than adapting or mirroring community standards. Wilson’s study has been highly influential in policing research, though the alternating use of his categorization as descriptive or proscriptive often misses a larger point: the competing functions of policing (in this case, law enforcement, service, and peacekeeping) are not simply differing orientations or goals but speak to different views of how the police institution can define its own realm, and whether the police can operate as a primarily bureaucratically-driven organization with its own goals in a setting which puts police organizations in conflict with various other stakeholders; at the same time, adapting a community orientation and rejection the ‘expert’ powers of police to fully define concepts of ‘order’ or ‘peace’ is not only unrealistic in almost any conceivable configuration but also raises further questions of how the police can effectively and *technically* evaluate, adapt, and respond to community-defined problems and also still maintain a unique skillset (especially relevant if one is to assume that the capacity to use force is increasingly unpalatable as a basic foundation of how police work is defined and structured under a philosophy of ‘community policing.’) Simply stating that police should ‘solve problems’ is not enough to explain how that process should be done (cf. Goldstein 1990): this observation is not novel, but the implied solutions themselves raise further questions; police (and especially researchers) can identify patterns of how police

can and should structure their work to best deal with various categories of problems—which arguably is simply a return to earlier conceptions of policing but with a variable vocabulary, e.g. "risk policing" rather than "crime prevention" (cf. Ericson and Haggerty 1997)—or else truly adapt a program of *ad hoc* or situational—discretion-based—approaches. The latter has occasionally been suggested within the broader framework of community-oriented policing, and is likely the best defense of the criticism that community policing has spent precious little time talking about actual communities as opposed to talking about police within those communities; the best way for police to maintain order in a community (rather than *enforcing* or *importing* order) may be a subtle approach combining both image work and a highly discretionary approach to social intervention, but this style of non-standardized policing is almost certainly one which is bound to face criticism and issues of transparency and fairness. The fact may be that community policing speaks of a "self-regulating community" not so much as an abandonment of the idea of 'community' but rather because this is the ideal in which policing can balance at least some of these critical issues and adapt a community orientation without sacrificing a professional image that can inspire trust or connotate fairness. The case at hand, while not necessarily a 'self-regulating community,' is arguably a similar case in which a police organization—by defining and presenting itself situationally and in the visage of particular and known individuals—can avoid relying on a crime-fighter image or law enforcement orientation and effectively present the image of shared community values.

The goal of the Revierpolizei in Falkenmark often appeared to be to simply maintain a form of solidarity, not necessarily even as a way to *directly* impact the community—while many problems could be solved, these were still often attributed as either symptoms of underlying social/structural problems or as normal or routine behaviors that will likely happen again—but rather as a way to 'keep the community alive' in terms of perceptions. With the recognition that most problems could be (best) dealt with privately, informally, or internally, it was seen that the best way to promote the ideas of order and safety broadly promoted by the police institution was to allow for stronger—often informal—networks connecting residents. Acts of solidarity ranged from small-scale symbolism, such as the stereotypical 'waving to other police cars' being extended to other service providers (firefighters, ambulances) but also to a greater and more individualized swath of the community. In contrast to more general models of bureaucratic organizations, the police—at least in a view from the street—were less focused on expanding the realm of defined and definable problems than on image work and maintaining relationships. In this context, when Officer Reiner, as station chief, says "there's not much happening today, it's better that way," this is not simply a

police officer looking forward to a more relaxed working day (though it is very much that!) but it is also an expression of the idea that the goal of the police is not to find problems regardless of the situation but rather to be responsive (ideally to community concerns.) There seemed to be agreement with Gusfield's (1989) statement that "all human problems are not public ones." (431) The art was in knowing how to allow for human problems to exist while still maintaining a community order.

7.7 Moving Images / Moving Targets: Ethnography and Community Policing

In the end, at the end, this is not a study of a community but of the people who perform a specific job within a specific community. Herbert Blumer set out a "cardinal principle of symbolism interactionism… that any empirically oriented scheme of human society, however derived, must respect the fact that in the first and last instances human society consists of people engaging in action." (1969: 7) It is difficult to present an image of the Revierpolizei that can speak for itself and also show the human qualities of the people who take up that role; ethnographies of police often start with exciting and dramatic scenes of action which can set the stage for the subsequent analysis of policing interactions, perspectives and culture. The most exciting and dramatic stories and experiences collected from the Revierpolizei in Falkenmark have been recounted and described already, but were most notable for not only being a *break* from the normality of routine work but for also being presented and talked about that way: drama and excitement was for the most part a risk rather than a reward. A more accurate scene to reflect the realities of this form of community policing would appear almost disjointed: police officers wouldn't talk like the audience expects police officers to talk, references would be made to a variety of people and events that play not obvious role in the immediate situation, and the scene would end without having a clear immediate resolution. In comparison to most scenes documented in urban police ethnographies, it would also be rather boring. Yet the idea that the most exciting, dangerous, and unpredictable moments of policing are rarely experienced, and that this disparity is a constant source of frustration for many police officers, is cliché in the literature. The key difference here is that the most 'boring' and everyday parts of policing were often not that indistinguishable from what officers valued the most about their jobs. The ability to act like a police officer (an almost universally recognizable genre of performance) and the capacity to take control of situations were two elements that officers were generally willing

to forego or to even delegate to others; the need to see the world through the problem-seeking lenses of the police was often secondary to a less structured, less definable perspective. Officers engaged in their work, and spoke about their world, in terms that reflected both their dedication to the institutional but also to their membership within a community, expressing both the general hopes and (more pointed) fears of an unstated solidarity.

This work began, rather than with a scene from the Revierpolizei themselves, with a brief description of a Hollywood Western. This was not intended to draw parallels to the work and life of big screen frontier lawmen and rural German community-oriented police officers, nor even to the universality of policing concepts and vocabulary, but rather to speak to the importance of the *concept* of police as a symbol in itself: as detached as the officers were from the stock images and ideal types of the policing institution at times, they could also never stop being police, and as much effort as they expended to be known personally, as people, they knew they were fighting an uphill battle against simply being seen as "the police." Their work was not to 'reshape society' to conform to bureaucratically defined standards of order or decorum, nor to even reshape society's image and approach to the police: their work was much more individual and varied from situation to situation. Presumably, a great deal of police work in other contexts is similar, and Falkenmark simply provides a more visible example of the police liminality, role-distancing and image work as a way to directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, maintain a broad but interpretable concept of community.

The view from the life-worlds explored was one which—while not necessarily emphasizing harmony—was not fixated on disharmony or conflict. The officers saw a general peace which needed occasional shoring up, but the larger looming problems in society were outside the scope of their work. Their world was not stationary, and change was inevitable; their work was not fighting the tides of the future, but it may have been holding down the fort for the time being and maintaining an order and cohesion until new meanings, vocabularies, ideologies, forms, or anything tangible and retrospectively essential emerges. This glimpse into the world and practices of these officers is an attempt to apply an ordering frame onto a state of affairs considered 'routine' but decades, if not longer, in the making and by now already outdated. Many of the officers presented here have already retired, many more will within the next decade. The police have struggled to find enough recruits to perform the basic tasks—patrol remaining, as predicted, the backbone of policing despite the skepticism of academics and reformers—and experienced, community-minded officers able to devote three years simply to 'learn the ropes' are not necessarily readily available. For better or worse,

the last generation of officers to have grown-up with a specific "East German" image of policing communities is on its way out. At the same time, the communities they have worked in for decades are changing; continuing demographic and economic decline seems inevitable, while right-wing and xenophobic sentiment is not only rising in Germany overall but especially in the "new German states" is increasingly driving and threatening to dominate politics. The specific combination of community acceptance and a more 'hands off' approach which seems to have allowed for, if not led to, the image of the Revierpolizei presented here may not survive the transition to a new generation of officers with their own images and ideations of police and police work and the forms of consensus which rhetorically and symbolically guide that work may not be as manageable with 'outsiders' become increasingly less symbolic and more frequently tangible, approachable, and targetable individuals living within common national borders. Policing and politics have never been separable: the long history of attempts to do so have led to the modern polarization of police and community which in turn led to the concept of "community-oriented policing" itself seem like a revolution. Yet the politics that govern the practice of policing fundamentally affect how society is constructed, what holds us together and what keeps us as strangers, suspects, and victims. Not just institutional and organizational structures but the basic ideas and constructions of *human nature* are what separate a policed community from a police state. Not just a desire to improve the quality of human life, but a reserved optimism towards the concept of community can transform the imposition of a punitive order into a constitutive social role based less on division and more on understanding.

Postscript: Retrospective Auto-ethnography

8

> "How could human behavior be described? Surely only be showing the actions of a variety of humans, as they are all mixed up together. Not what *one* man is doing *now*, but the whole hurly-burly is the background against which we see an action, and it determines our judgement, our concepts, and our reactions." (Ludwig Wittgenstein, Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology vol. 2 § 629)

The field research that formed the basis of this study was, as is usually the case, the result of various serendipitous processes, decisions by myself and others that cannot be rationally explained either in the moment or in hindsight, and ended rather unceremoniously based on sudden, subtle shifts in the political winds. These are all elements that are not only common to the point of cliché in fieldwork, but are in themselves central elements of the analysis. Gaining access to a research site and establishing the means to even begin collecting data are not simply hurdles to conducting research, as more traditionalist models might indicate, but are themselves the first real glimpses of a new world. Managing gatekeeping is not simply a "make or break" first step, but it is the first test of an ethnographer's ability to interpret social processes, power dynamics, and latent hierarchies on the fly.

The inexplicable decision on my part which was necessary to facilitate this research was a relatively spontaneous decision to move to Germany in 2008—at first as an academic exchange in political science but leading to a second relatively spontaneous decision to abandon my plans to study policing in New Jersey in order to stay in German, learn the language and culture, and eventually involve myself in the still rather fledgling field of social science-oriented German criminology. A positivist student of linguistics or a similar field might assume X amount of hours (let's call it the hackneyed "10,000") to master a language and

A. Bielejewski, *Holding down the Fort*,
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culture; an interactionist would counter that the only way to fully master a language and culture would be to have unchallengeable authority to determine what is right and wrong (after all, 'native speakers don't make mistakes.') The gaps in my knowledge were—and remain—infinite, as "authorities" (whether police or simply natives to German culture and language) can take *ad hoc* actions and undertake unique or non-standard speech actions justified *post hoc* by unfamiliar logics. This serves as a reminder, of course, that the purpose of sociological inquiry is not so much to seek out universal and unwavering systems of rules but rather to examine how actions are taken and how the concepts of rules (as justifications, as precipitating causes, etc.) overlaps with what is actually done. There are ways that things *are done*—which are commonly seen in the use of phrases similar to "no one does that!"—but, the trick of being a member of a society or community or a social club is knowing when the rules apply, when they don't, and when they sort of do. Essentially two groups of people, with countless exceptions, are legitimately allowed to enter through "no entry" doors: those who are fully authorized and aware that the sign is not intended for them; and those who are lost, confused, and/or hopeless and likely unable to even comprehend the sign. Ethnographers can find themselves alternatingly in either group, but a tendency to fall into the later (or at least to be seen that way) can certainly be an advantage: violating rules, even or especially due to ignorance, is one of the quickest way to learn how those rules are thought of by others, how it is expected that these rules will be communicated, and to gauge the extent to which one is being aided, accepted, tolerated, etc. within the immediate setting. (see Garfinkel 1967 on 'breaching experiments')

Adapting to a new, though far from unfamiliar, culture and its accompanying grammar and vocabulary, in the end proved to be at least as beneficial as problematic. If the goal of the ethnographer is to make the unfamiliar into the familiar, I was already well into this process, but with an inadvertently well-trained eye for things unfamiliar to me (which happened to be most things.) 'German-isms' ranging from familiar phrases and idioms to public figures and celebrities to the use of German-specific brand names to indicate specific products flowed into conversations with casual and everyday use, essentially challenging me to either a) interrupt the flow to ask a question, likely increasing my "clueless foreigner" meter, b) trying to guess the meaning from context, with mixed results, or c) making a mental or written note of the person/place/thing/phrase/generic unknown element and remembering to either look it up later or to ask someone about it later on. An unsystematic mixture of a, b, and c was ultimately implemented, with every attempt made to fill the gaps in my knowledge prior to putting too

much weight on the use of terms and examples which I have conspicuously misunderstood. (A significant number of the names I did not understand turned out to be either state government officials or “Schlager” singers.)

The difficulties here were worth powering through this uncertainty, as the admixture of concepts and topics—switching from pop culture commentary to politics to a story about a “police known” local man’s drug overdose to a complaint about the ongoing renovations of a kitchen—was among the best presentations of a policing *habitus* presented to me almost as a stage play, and something that could have easily been written off as “mostly non-police talk” and left out of the fieldnotes entirely. The use of these symbols, representations, etc. and their juxtapositions could have already shown something (if nothing else, the rather banal observation that police, like people in general, don’t really like to only talk about work even while at work), but my perfectly excusable unfamiliarity (and therefore presumed lack of prejudice) created an opening for these things to be explained to be in a helpfully normative way.

My uncertain and difficult to succinctly explain status proved to be advantageous for this and other reasons, as I have described in a German-language text. (Bielejewski 2016b) A simple example: upon my first official visit to the police headquarters, I was taken to a meeting with various men and (if I remember correctly) one woman. I was introduced to everyone there, but these words and titles were unsurprisingly in German and had little obvious practical meaning to me, there were several terms and titles and ranks and locations thrown at me very quickly, and, because this was my first meeting with the actual ‘location managers’ who would need to support my research and arrange my field visits, I was more concerned with participating in the interaction and presenting myself as a competent and mostly harmless sociologist, rather than with actively documenting the proceedings. As a result, my only real take-aways from this meeting with stuck with me long after were a not-for-public-consumption presentation of crime and other police relating problems (I was an insider!) and a gnawing terror that, apart from the chief and the officer in charge of press and media who I had already met, no one seemed particularly *friendly*, and if anything more *annoyed* with my presence. After the meeting ended (because another meeting, not-for-researcher-consumption, was beginning) I was spontaneously offered a tour by one of the officers present—I believe from the *Kriminalpolizei*, the detectives. The tone immediately changed, as we were able to joke (many of the jokes which I have referred to as being repeated many times were first encountered in these 20 minutes) and I was given a brief but “definitive” history of East Germany, Brandenburg, Falkenmark, the Berlin Wall and (re)unification, mostly predicated on the assumption that these topics were brand new to me. The topic

of East-West differences seemed to be somewhat sensitive, at least from my perspective going in, and this seemed to be a way for officers to ensure, or prevent, my "hot take" from the research revolving around social decline or presenting a thoroughly negative portrayal of the region. I was further given a tour of the station and shown various offices, and given a brief explanation of various units (along with the internal police stereotypes of the individuals who choose, or are forced, to work there.)

More notable is what happened next: I encountered another officer, I believe it was Officer Karsten of the Revierpolizei but my fieldnotes here are sparse and non-specific (fixed pseudonyms were only developed later on), and essentially the same procedure was repeated. I was given a similar tour, but with a new hierarchy of roles, new stereotypes of policing aspirations, new jokes (if along the same vein), and new explanations of German history and the essence of "Ossi" culture. This was essentially an ethnographer's dream: as expected, I had found it difficult to adequately explain my research or my goals, as I was open to anything situationally "interesting," had no specific problems I hoped to solve, and did not want to restrict my view in any way either to only seeing what was shown to me or to being limited by my own specific interests. I imagine I was seen, especially early on, as more of a journalist than a 'scientist,' and the various respondents assumed they were giving me the final product for me to textually replicate the realities of policing. Yet this data was even more useful in showing the "multiple realities" (Schutz 1962) of policing. I began to worry, however, by the third time this scene repeated, and later on once it became clear that these 'basic explanations' of aspects of German society would become commonplace, and attempted to politely make it clear that I had, in fact, already been living in Germany for several years so as not to be deceptive. This did not seem to make any difference, and most officers seemed proud of their opportunity to explain to the American how things worked, and I was grateful for this.

This leads to a common issue with explaining, presenting, and ultimately conducting ethnographic research: what is the point? A usual understanding of research follows the classical "scientific model" (of middle school science fair fame) presuming that a scientist will have identified a specific problem and developed a hypothesis explaining this problem once and for all even prior to arriving at the site to collect data. Qualitative research in the social sciences does not always work this way, of course, and interpretive research even less so. My starting point was specifically that I knew nothing, much less what problems might exist or how they should be solved with verifiable certainty. Once this point becomes clear, officers and those involved in the research tended to be relived, once they realized that their opinions were being valued more than as simple data

points to confirm my own expectations, and that I was not only relying on them to explain their work (and more) but also that I would return to them to follow up. Of course, I also made it clear that I was also not a journalist and was not simply documenting their statements but was attempting to interpret everything I experienced.

This is almost certainly reflected in the text, or at least it was clear to me while making decisions about how detailed (as well as how authoritative or uncertain) to present background information about things that might be familiar to some readers but not others. This applied particularly to aspects of German society or German policing which are likely to be obvious enough to not merit further comment to a reader living in Germany but too laden with meaning and implications to gloss over or oversimplify; for example, the unique role of the *Ordnungsämter* in Germany in dealing with some minor problems and local ordinances but also getting involved in many public problems or altercations means that the burden put on police is, at a minimum, differently distributed than might otherwise be the case. The need to first fully understand these concepts and then to explain them in a way that makes them contextually understandable within the analysis without attempting to present a definitive all-encompassing account of them (if nothing else to avoid unduly boring a read familiar with these things…) allowed at least some opportunity to once again "make the familiar strange," and to view this unique 'local factors' (such as the fact that German Officers are almost exclusively referred to as simply "Herr" or "Frau" rather than "Officer," "Detective," or "Sergeant") as specific social constructions that have established themselves as traditions yet might still be in flux or even being 're-negotiated' at the backstage levels of German society (as is the case with the Ordungsamt specifically.) Overall, I continued to learn new highly relevant information, stereotypes, and assumptions about and surrounding the police continuously prior to, throughout, and well after the field research period.

In the end, in some ways the finished product is as much an ethnography of my own interpretation and experience of German society, focusing on another taken-for-granted aspect that is rarely, though not never, openly questioned: the role of the police in society understood broadly. The times when I was able to ask 'regular' (non-expert) Germans questions about rules, social orders, institutions, and so on and received an answer along the lines of, "hmm I've never thought about that," I considered that a success. This made my stated goals more laborious, if not actually more difficult (and probably aided in them quite a bit) as I essentially needed to simultaneously approach, anthropologically, the 'common

sense' and unspectacular everyday knowledge or shared assumptions surrounding all aspects of social and daily life that might in some way impact police work while also gaining an intimidate familiarity with the insider perspectives of police—and not just any police, but a very specific type of police, while also learning to appreciate and estimate their own 'border maintenance' between their internal identities and 'regular cops.' As Robert Blanco once sang: ein bisschen Spaß muss sein!

Familiarity becomes an issue in ethnography but is also essential to it. It is, simply put, impractical to arrive at a location, even by invitation, and then demand or ask politely to be able to routinely observe the members of that community at work over the period of a year or more. The fieldwork needs to begin, rapport needs to be developed, and research interests need to be narrowed down to some extent (for example, the decision to focus specifically on the Revierpolizei only developed several months into the fieldwork, and after that point most suggestions to accompany other units were turned down if it meant one less opportunity to accompany Revierpolizei officers.) Then once the nature of the research and some idea of my goals and working habits and who I am generally have been better established, more long-term planning can begin. Deadlines in ethnography, as in most work relying on the development of grounded theory, tend to be based more on practical factors (field access, real life etc.) as much as theoretical saturation: at some point, the ethnographer's presence in the field is simply no longer tolerated, or has become so established that nothing new is really seen not because there is nothing to be seen, but because it becomes too difficult to observe and document without pre-filtering and seeing like a "local."

The next major risk was then how the data will ultimately be used. Popular culture and the dominance of the natural sciences have framed science as a "take-away" activity in which proven and unassailable (short of replication) findings can be trimmed down to one sentence. Navigating an explanatory line between the previous statement and "there are no real findings" is tricky business, as the study itself risks becoming a political football, and, of course even (or "unsurprisingly") within a state institution, research is seen as an investment which is expected to pay off. As I have described, a major concern by various officers (and some administrators) was that the findings would show that the Revierpolizei are either inefficient according to traditional metrics or are operating at less than maximum capacity, meaning that officers could be given additional duties (specifically the dreaded prisoner transport.) The study was occurring at a period of local downsizing, in which it was expected that several retiring officers would not be replaced

at all, and a serious question was essentially whether policing responsibilities could effectively be calculated simply based on population (e.g. one officer per 5,000 citizens) or whether, and how, other factors such as geography, distance, infrastructure, and demographics need to play a role, with (at least according to the officers and administrators I spoke with) budgetary concerns taking priority.

The field research period ultimately ended due to objections from a senior administrator. His concerns were entirely legitimate within a policing habitus and in line with much of what I have written, and entirely at odds with the nature of sociological investigation. He stated, more or less, that demonstrating the range of police behavior and decision-making would remind the public that police can make mistakes and can't effectively treat everyone equally, essentially making a version of the "how the sausage is made" argument. (cf. Newburn 2022) This is the central tenet of my research here and elsewhere, though: if we cannot talk about how policing is done, and how we think it should be done, then the way we claim our society is organized and the actual society we inhabit are as different as a dream and reality.

In the end, I don't think seeing "how the sausage is made" in this case could be considered the worst thing that could happen to the police I'm discussing here. Publicly available narratives of police have been in flux for decades (although realistically, throughout the entire history of policing) and in the years since the fieldwork ending it has become increasingly plausible to describe policing—and here I am speaking primarily as an American but with one eye toward Germany—as a powder keg irresponsibly close to an open flame. Social media has become, for legitimate and laudable reasons, a trendy topic in policing research and arguable should become even more so, particularly as the images of policing made available, and the speed with which they are disseminated, has been so thoroughly impacted, but at the same time public opinion in terms of police in general do not seem to have been affected as thoroughly as one might expect. Social media and 'modern' technology played such a minor role in the fieldwork that it is entirely plausible that, as many officers stated, essentially nothing had changed in the past two decades. Even in a personal sense—shifting into auto-ethnography—the forms of communication and information gathering available to me changed during the course of the research and afterwards. As the most obvious example, I was still using a 'dumb' phone during most of the field work—one notable memory that stands out is needing to wait around in my guesthouse room for an email telling me it was okay to visit the police station, because if I left the room I would have no email access. The situations I described earlier with

being unfamiliar with many references and phrases may have played out differently had I been able to promptly look up these topics myself, but this—hopefully obviously—seems to be a significant threat to the ethnographic spirit.

In general, the police I encountered tended to avoid the "scientific" explanations of effectiveness and how to properly conduct police work that seem to be the (unattainable?) goal towards which policing is moving. They saw police work as primarily about communication and—for lack of a better term—networking. Communication was furthermore not a specialized skill or something which could be learned through listed rules but rather was more of a gut-feeling, commonsense concept based around respecting people when they deserve it and allowing room for outside perspectives. In short, I can—as I'm sure you can—see both upsides and downsides here, which I hope to have illuminated somewhat in the previous chapters. As I've stated previously, this work was intended to describe a specific form of organizing society (that is, policing) in a specific time and place, and by design these findings are not intended to be 'generalizable' to all, or even really to any, other police organizations. The ways I have learned to approach and look at *these police,* however, might be relevant not in only looking at others but might also provide some insight into the nature of policing itself and how we think and talk about it.

Despite my protests that this investigation was only about one unit in one German county, it is certainly clear that a great deal of my thinking, evidence, examples, and otherwise came from outside. This is not a contradiction but intentional and unavoidable: the way we think about the things we take for granted is affected and impacted but the other things we already know and take for granted. Our views and understandings of central, basic things like "policing" or "society" cannot simply change, as they are embedded alongside and within other concepts, and attempting to view the police in Germany in Falkenmark as a purely new unknown entity would be simply impossible. As I have argued, this is the nature of symbolism and the point of the police, to be identifiable and clear even in 'passive' communication. This is also a core element of the ethnographic spirit which I was fortunately able to embrace, hopefully for the better: everything is connected.

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